

PICTURES

By: Gryffindorclutz

SUMMARY: Draco has pictures of Hermione that she's desperate to keep hidden. How far will she go before it's too much?

COMPLETE INFORMATION

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Chapter 1: Pictures

The noise from the dance flitted around her, but she couldn't hear it. All she could hear was the pulsing of her own heart as she excused herself from her friends, the pounding thumps exploding in her ears and her blood rushing through her veins sounding like river rapids. He'd never wanted to do this so publicly before. She supposed she shouldn't have danced with Dean. Seamus and Dean had snuck in a bottle of fire whiskey and the effects had made Dean extra affectionate tonight. Dean's actions while they were dancing were harmless enough, but it did send Pavarti running to her asking if there was something going on between the two of them. However, Dean was not her current problem and neither were Pavarti and the gossip mongers of Hogwarts. Her current problem was waiting on the lawn under the big tree. Making her way onto the courtyard, she passed groups of giggling fourth years and snogging couples. It would be incredibly easy for one of them to wander over to the tree and discover what was about to take place.

She walked to the tree and stood under it, waiting for him. She could feel him watching her and she knew he was trying to make her nervous. It was working. She was about to go back inside and rounded the tree when she came face to face with his cold pale grey eyes. The branches of the tree marred the moonlight so that only his eyes were illuminated, but that was all she needed to know his mood. She could smell him and there was a sour note to the typical sandalwood and musk that usually permeated around him. Apparently Dean and Seamus weren't the only ones to sneak in a bottle of fire whiskey. She forced herself to remain still as he regarded her and she met his gaze. She had done this enough times now that she shouldn't feel embarrassed, yet she always did.

He leaned forwards and kissed her, demanding, passionate and angry. He had no right to be, and yet he was. Exclusiveness wasn't a part of their deal. He ran his tongue over hers and she fought for dominance, eventually winning before he pulled away and grabbing her by the shoulders, pushed her to the ground.

"I thought I told you to wear blue," he growled as he fumbled under her dress pulling at her knickers.

"I wore blue to the last dance we had." She bucked into his hand as his fingers stroked her wetness before plunging into her core. He played with her folds a few moments before undoing his trousers, causing his enormous cock to come into view. The sight of it always made her catch her breath and she still wasn't sure how he managed to fit all of it inside her.

"No matter," he grunted as he positioned the head of his shaft at her entrance. "I hope you keep this dress. The color pink goes very well with the virginal faade you're trying to keep up and I want you to remember that I fucked you while you wore it, right outside, less than twenty yards from where your friends and head of house were. I hope you weren't planning to go back to the Gryffindor rooms with Thomas, because I doubt he'll be pleased that not only are you not a virgin, but you wreck of another man." He began pumping into her with abandon and she wrapped her legs around his waist, drawing him in closer and biting on his ear to hear him hiss.

"You bastard, I hate you," she said as his thrusts became painfully slow and deep.

"Don't talk dirty, love. I don't need it. You in this dress almost made me come just watching you come down the stairs. I'm glad they made that stupid rule that the Head Boy and Girl had to attend the Leaver's Ball together. I wouldn't have been able to stand watching Thomas run his

slimy hands all over you."

"Why should you care what I do with Dean? All you care about is making sure that your part of the bargain gets fulfilled."

"I've just decided that I don't share," he groaned as he pulled one of her legs up to rest on his shoulder.

"What!" she cried and attempted to sit up, but he pushed back down. "You can't just change the rules like that!"

"I can change the rules whenever I want. You're more than welcome to leave our little bargain. I'm sure Potter would love to see those pictures as would Dean. I could make copies and hand them out on graduation day. I bet your parents would love to see their little girl wrapped around her best friend's most loathed enemy like a whore." He paused to shift inside her and he moved the top of her dress down so that one of her pert nipples was exposed. Suckling on her like a babe he began to pump in earnest again. Hermione closed her eyes and cursed him for being so good at what he did. She knew she would agree to his terms because she was terrified of what might happen if those pictures got out. Closing her eyes and losing herself in the feeling, she thought back to six months ago and the events that caused the pictures to happen in the first place.

FLASHBACK

She ran through the halls with tears staining her eyes, but not yet falling. She wouldn't let them fall until she was safely back in the Head's common room. She had just gone to Gryffindor Tower to see her friends and to visit Ron. The two of them weren't officially dating, but they had kissed out by the lake and he'd carried her books to class for her all week. She wanted to talk to him and find out what they were so she headed through the portrait of the Fat Lady and into the comfort of her house common room. Everyone had been warm, but vague in answering questions of Ron's whereabouts. Finally, Colin Creevey let it slip that he was in his dormitory. Hermione tried to head up, but Dean stopped her saying she might not want to see what was up there. A dreadful feeling in her stomach made her push past Dean and when she got to their room her heart stopped. Ron was fucking Lavender Brown on his bed like his life depended on it. They never even noticed that she was there because she ran from the scene immediately.

Finally coming to her own portrait she shuffled in and flopped down on the couch letting her tears fall. She would always be the good girl that boys took home to their mothers and slept around on when her back was turned. Was she that awful that she couldn't inspire passion in somebody? Yes, she was bookish, but she certainly wasn't ugly and it wasn't as if she wouldn't be willing to have sex with someone she cared for, she just didn't advertise it the way that Lavender did. Leaning back into the sofa she hit something hard. Reaching under the cushion she pulled out a bottle of Ogden's Fire Whiskey. She'd never drank before, but now felt like the perfect time to start.

Three shots in she was feeling very warm and much better about herself. The portrait opened and the head boy walked in. If he was shocked to see the normally stringent Hermione Granger drunk, he didn't show it. Rather he sat down and asked her why she felt it necessary to pinch from his stash. Taking another shot she relayed the story to him and poured her heart out. When she was done he didn't say anything, he merely leaned forward and kissed her. She

accepted the kiss and before long she was putting all her frustration from being rejected by Ron into giving the Head Boy the snog of his life. She drank more of the whiskey and at some point her robes and tie came off before she was being carried upstairs to his room. Everything else was a bit hazy after that.

When she woke up, her head was pounding and her mouth tasted like she had given Crookshanks a bath with her tongue. She stretched her legs and that was when she realized she wasn't alone. There was an arm over her waist that curled in reflexively pulling her closer when she tried to move away. As her backside touched the skin of that person, she realized she was naked. Knowing that there was only one person that it could possibly be, she steeled herself and rolled over to look into the grey eyes of Draco Malfoy.

"Morning, love," he said with a sarcastic smirk. She concentrated very hard on not screaming and shimmied out from under him to try to retreat back to her own room. She only got as far two steps away before he was up and had snaked a hand between her thighs, his long fingers gripping the tender flesh to tug her back to him. When she stumbled he pushed his arms under her and lifted her back to the center of his bed, laying his lean, naked body on top of hers. "Where do you think you're going? You promised me another round in the morning."

"Another what?" Hermione was horrified. Not only was she intimately pressed up against her best friend's nemesis, it had become apparent that she had done something with him last night. "I don't have to do anything Malfoy, now get off of me." She had to get out of there. Most of all she had to prevent Harry and Ron from finding out.

"Ah-ah-ah," he chastised. "You promised me and I intend to collect. You put on one hell of a performance last night Granger. If I hadn't seen the blood for myself I would never have believed that last night was your first time."

Hermione went cold. She was sore between her legs and Malfoy's comments made her freeze. She couldn't have, could she? "I don't believe you," she whispered.

"Oh you don't, hm?" he smirked at her discomfort. "How about I give you some proof? You were more than willing to smile for the camera." Leaning over her he retrieved a set of pictures, but not before bending to her exposed breast to flick his tongue across her sensitive pink nipple.

"How did you get pictures developed so quickly if they were taken last night?" she asked, dread filling her stomach.

"I created a dark room in my closet. Photography has always been a hobby of mine. Once you were asleep I had to get these developed, they were too good to wait. You talk in your sleep, by the way."

"I do not!" she squeaked before taking the stack of moving pictures he offered. Once she got them she was horrified. Never in her wildest dreams had she imagined doing these things, much less with Draco Malfoy. In one picture, she continually opened her bra and massaged her own breasts while licking her lips at the photographer. In another, she was giving him head and looking up at the camera to wink suggestively. In another she masturbated while wearing his Slytherin tie and nothing else and the final ones were the worst. In each successive one she was wrapped around Malfoy, her hips moving in a desperate attempt to get her own pleasure. In some she was submissive, in others she moved like a wanton little whore. It appeared that they had exhausted every possible position and in each one she was obviously enjoying herself.

"Do you like them? I was considering making a portfolio." Malfoy slid over to her, taking her in his arms as if they were proper lovers who cared about one another.

"I'm taking these, and I'm leaving!" she exclaimed. She tried once again to exit, but his voice stopped her.

"Go ahead, Granger. If you want your own personal copy that's fine. I'll make matching ones for scarhead and the weasel. I'm sure they would love to see what their little princess can do."

"You wouldn't..." her mouth was dry. What would people think of her? Would Harry ever look at her the same way if he saw those pictures? Her entire sense of self worth was wrapped up in being the sensible bookworm persona that she portrayed. If she lost that, she wouldn't know what to do with herself. She would lose respect from everyone because she had allowed Malfoy to defile her and she had enjoyed it. Looking at him, she realized that he was deadly serious. He had a lot to gain from taking these pictures public, she didn't. "What do you want?" she asked him, ready to burst into tears.

"Well, you do owe me another go at it and I've got a little morning glory that won't take care of itself, pet." He smirked and leaned back in bed.

"So, if I sleep with you again, you'll give me the negatives?"

"No, I just won't show these pictures to your Gryffindor friends. You can't doctor photographs in the wizarding world, so they'll know you had a smashing good time."

"I could say you put the Imperious curse on me."

"Look at your eyes, pet. You don't have the glazed, zombie look of someone under the Imperious."

"What will it take to get these back?" She had already resigned herself to her fate.

"Oh, I'll think of something. For now though, I want complete access to you in exchange for making certain that these pictures aren't blown up to life size proportions and hung in the Great Hall."

"What do you mean 'complete access'?"

"I mean, I want you at least twice a week. You're a bloody good shag, Granger, and I'm not giving that up."

"Are you completely crazy? No!"

Malfoy pretended to think for a moment. "I wonder how long it will take before Potter decides to speak to you again."

Hermione sighed in defeat. This would hurt Harry terribly. The war was over and although Malfoy had not joined the Death Eaters, his father had done enough harm for six more Malfoy generations to be tainted by his name. Harry had never trusted Malfoy and still hated him with a passion. So did Ron, for that matter, but Hermione didn't give one whit for Ron at the moment.

"Fine, but I want your word that those pictures and this...this 'affair' will never see the light of day in Hogwarts."

Smirking, Draco replied, "You've got it." With that, he covered her body with his own and proceeded to take what was promised to him.

END FLASHBACK

When Hermione came, Draco drank her moan before spilling his warm seed into her belly. He lay inside her for a moment before getting up and adjusting his dress robes. Hermione sat up and fixed her hair before letting Draco help her to her feet. Feeling their combined fluids on her thighs, she rubbed them together before trudging back to the ball room and the oblivious couples that were her friends. Hoping that no one had noticed her absence she made her rounds through the room making sure that everything was okay. When she looked over at Ron and Lavender snogging their hearts out, she couldn't hide the twinge of jealousy she felt. Why couldn't Ron have noticed her?

Draco stepped back into the Great Hall and watched the head girl attempt to look as if she hadn't just had her brains shagged out by her best friend's enemy. Said best friend was currently talking to her and looking at her with pity as she looked on at the Weasel and Lavender Brown. The weasel really didn't know what he was missing. He'd gotten head from Brown last year and while she was willing, she was unenthusiastic. The Weasel's loss had been Draco's gain, however. Since deflowering the head girl he'd only had one or two trysts with other girls just so that he didn't lose face or make anyone suspicious, but he hadn't even wanted any of those. Granger was giving him exactly what he needed and it was all the sweeter because not only could he make her squirm, it was happening right under Potter's nose.

They had agreed on at least two shags a week and Hermione never disappointed. Draco thought of how ironic it was that the one girl that didn't want a repeat performance of his skills in bed was the only one not clamoring for it. He usually made it a habit to not sleep with the same girl too much. They tended to get too clingy. He knew he was good in bed, but what most girls were after was his fortune. Since his father's fall from grace he had inherited the Malfoy fortune and properties. At least with Hermione he knew she didn't have any designs on trapping him into marriage. It was incredibly freeing to be able to fuck without looking for ulterior motives. He knew she wouldn't be in his bed if he didn't have such good dirt on her, but he didn't care. All that mattered was that he was screwing the Gryffindor Princess almost nightly, no strings attached. Watching her exit the ball, Draco decided that he would leave as well. He wanted to watch her take off her jewelry and dress and then he wanted to fuck her into the mattress. Twice in one night would be heavenly and if she passed out in his bed, he could finagle a morning shag out of her as well. Grinning to himself he made his way to the head dorms blessing the day his mother insisted he take up photography.

Chapter 2

Draco opened his eyes and looked at the clock on his bedside table. It was eight in the morning and that meant that he had exactly one hour to prepare for breakfast. Deciding he wasn't hungry, he snuggled into the brunette next to him. If anyone had told him six months ago that snuggling into Hermione Granger's sleeping form would bring him a sense of peace, he would have laughed at them outright. However, he had to admit that waking up with her warm, nude

body curled next to him was becoming the highlight of his week. Last night's dance had gone off without a hitch and Draco was extremely proud of the work they'd done.

Since the beginning of their arrangement, Draco had been pleased with the steady amount of mind blowing sex he'd received, but also with how well their work habits had gone. They now studied together in the common room they shared and prefect rounds went much smoother. Draco found they were actually quite similar when it came to dedication to school work and a thirst for knowledge. Besides the damning pictures he had taken their first night together, Draco had taken a few others of the witch in question when she wasn't looking. The one he had of her reading on the window seat of their common room was his favorite. He had grown accustomed to Hermione and was actually quite nervous about what would happen in a week when they would graduate Hogwarts and their paths would no longer cross.

Having been a loner by nature, Draco had never experienced any kind of intimacy with anyone other than a house elf. His mother loved him, but she remained aloof when it came to her son, his father behaving similarly except when he wanted to prove something to Draco. Draco had grown up hungry for his father's approval as a result and in desperate want of company. Crabbe and Goyle had sufficed for a time until he had found Blaise Zabini. Blaise was as loyal a friend as he was likely to get when it came to Slytherins, but Draco knew that Blaise never would have bothered with him if it hadn't been for his influence and money. For this reason, he didn't really know what friendship was. He'd never been in a situation in which two people met with each other just because they enjoyed the other's company and not because important alliances had to be formed. Pansy Parkinson had been a good enough companion for awhile, but Draco still felt that same sense of emptiness with her. When Pansy figured out that Draco had no intentions of marrying her, she had moved on to other wealthy sons of Slytherin families, eventually snagging Theodore Nott. This left Draco free to plow his way through most of the girls in his year at Hogwarts. Each girl was willing to let him do as he pleased, because if he happened to fall for one of them or if he got one pregnant, then that girl would live the rest of her life like royalty. Draco slept with these girls, but he never felt 'intimate' with them.

His mother and father had never been 'intimate' with each other. They shared a bed, but had separate bathrooms and spent most of their time in opposite wings of the house from each other. Their lives didn't affect each other except when it came to making decisions about Draco. With his newfound 'relationship' with Hermione, their lives interconnected quite often. They shared a common room and a bathroom and since the night Draco had insisted upon taking her in the shower, their morning rituals were now shared.

When Draco stepped out of the shower in the mornings, Hermione often absentmindedly handed him a towel as she brushed her teeth. That simple, non-chalant act of consideration affected him more than he cared to admit. At night, as they brushed their teeth together, Draco often marveled at how much he enjoyed sharing his life with another person. Watching Potter's muggle-born goddess share the most mundane of acts with him made him exceedingly happy. Not only did he know what she looked like when she came apart in his arms, he knew what she looked like when she woke up in the mornings and knew the texture of her skin after she washed her face one final time before bed. This was what 'intimacy' meant to Draco. It went far beyond just sharing each other's bodies, it meant sharing daily routines. That was why he'd gotten so upset at the thought of her being with Dean Thomas. It wasn't the fact that she might sleep with him that bothered Draco as much as the fact that she would start spending more and more time with Dean, taking with her their morning and evening rituals. She would hold up her end of the bargain sexually, but Draco's intimacy with another person would forever be gone.

Smiling to himself, Draco knew that as long as he had those pictures he could dictate whatever he wanted and she would comply. Six months was a long time for him to keep shagging the same girl, but it seemed the more they shagged, the more he wanted to have it off with her. She was his personal walking, talking, thinking doll. While he sat there thinking, his doll woke up.

"You know, you're actually quite attractive when you don't open your mouth," she yawned.

"The same could be said of you, know-it-all." He pulled her closer to him and she obliged by settling her head on his chest. For a moment Draco wondered what it would be like if she was his girlfriend. What would it feel like to have her here because she wanted to be and not because he made her. She had no interest in his money and his place in society actually seemed to be a hindrance to her like of him. Would she be more attentive? Would they go to Hogsmeade together and would she dress up to please him? It was this line of thought that prompted the next phrase that came out of his mouth.

"I think we should go to Italy for a few weeks after graduation."

Hermione looked up at him, confused. "What do you mean 'we'? I can't afford to go to Italy. It would take all of my savings that I was planning on using to get a flat. Why don't you ask Parkinson if she wants to go."

"Because not only is she now taken by Nott and I have no desire to die a very painful death, but I would rather grind a cork screw through my eardrums than listen to her screech non-stop for three weeks. Besides, it isn't as if paying for you is going to put a dent in my wallet, much less my savings. I'll let the staff at our house in Napoli know we'll be arriving on first of July."

"What? You can't just order my life around like that! What would I tell my parents? What would I tell Harry and the Weasleys?"

"Tell them whatever you want. You're the brightest witch of your age, I'm sure you'll think of something."

"I can't go to Italy with you." Hermione was emphatic.

"Then how are you going to fulfill our little bargain when you're in England and I'm in Napoli? Do you think that graduating is going to make those pictures any less embarrassing? I suppose you could always blame it on the folly of youth."

"You mean you want this to continue after we leave Hogwarts? How long do you intend to keep this up?"

"Until I get tired of it." The truth was, Draco didn't know when it would end and he suddenly dreaded the day that she no longer feared the ramifications of the pictures. She was still young, so they could be very damning, especially if she wanted to work for the ministry. He did not want to lose this closeness they had.

Sighing, Hermione defeatedly replied, "I guess we're going to Italy then." She moved to get up and Draco took the chance to admire her nude body as she walked across the room. Picking up his shirt from the night before she put it on and without thinking, handed him his robe. She was conscientious by nature, so she didn't even notice the small things she did for Draco, but it made his day.

"Would it really be so bad to spend three weeks on an Italian beach with me?" he asked in mock hurt.

"No, actually it wouldn't. The thing that sours it, however is the fact that I have to hide this trip from my friends and family because I'm being blackmailed into sleeping with you because of one drunken night of lapse of reason."

"Don't act like you don't enjoy it." He smirked at her and she blushed, rolled her eyes and walked into their bathroom to start her morning shower.

Getting up, he walked into the bathroom behind her and began brushing his teeth. When he was done he clipped his nails while waiting on her to get out of the shower. They chatted through the curtain and for a girl who had been so tight-legged for her seven years at Hogwarts, she was surprisingly comfortable being naked around him. He supposed it was a result of being raised muggle. Maybe they were freer with their bodies. It would make sense since the clothing they wore was so skin-tight and restricting. He hoped that during their vacation he would get to see Granger in more muggle clothing. He was particularly interested in a thing called a 'bikini'. He had seen them before, of course, but he'd never seen Granger in one and he dearly hoped that her bathing costume wasn't as covering as the thing with a skirt his mother wore.

When Hermione finished she stepped out of the shower and he stepped in. He spoke to her while she tamed her mass of curls, and he washed his body. Thinking to himself of how much more fun his shower would be if she were in there with him, he pushed the thought aside because he knew she wouldn't want to get her hair wet again. Besides, she'd already fulfilled her part of the bargain three fold this week. Draco wasn't positive, but he thought that sometimes she just participated in their sexual activities because she truly wanted to. She was an extremely passionate lover who gave as good as she got. Some girls just lay there and wait for things to happen, or spend so much time worrying about pleasing him, that they never allowed him to give them any kind of pleasure. While he enjoyed being sucked off, he also enjoyed the power trip he got when he could make Hermione come, screaming out his name. She ran the gamut and was open to suggestion.

Italy was going to be wonderful because he could finally squire her around in the open. He didn't know why, but it was important to him someone, somewhere knew that she was his. He supposed it was because he was her first and only lover. He'd never been with a virgin before. Even Pansy had sought out Marcus Flint before trying her skills out on him. His friend Blaise was the resident cherry picker of Hogwarts and Draco could understand his addiction after being Hermione's first. He felt a sense of ownership over her because now, every time she spread her legs, she would remember him. No matter how many lovers she had, he would always be remembered, not necessarily for skill, but just because he had gotten there first.

When he emerged from the shower, she was already dressed and waiting on him. Even though once they left their common room they reverted back to the role of bitter strangers, they always left together. As they walked down the hall to the library, Draco caught up with her and moved her hair aside to plant a quick kiss on the back of her neck.

"Next week starts at midnight tonight. I'd advise you not to wear yourself out during the day." Shivering from the kiss, she gave him a slight smile before heading to her usual table in the library. He knew she would be back early tonight.

Chapter 3

Waiting for her parents at the close of the graduation ceremony, Hermione took a moment to study Malfoy. He was standing with the Zabini family with his usual smug expression on his face. He seemed happy enough, but Hermione noticed that his mother wasn't there. She had of course sent flowers and the Excelcius V, the latest model of broom, but her pressing engagements in France couldn't be bothered for her son's graduation. Since his mother was really the only family he had, that meant that Draco was quite alone. She almost felt sorry for him.

"Oh, darling, we're so proud of you! You can't imagine what sight it was to watch our little girl give a speech as Head Girl at her own graduation ceremony. You really have grown into quite a young lady." Hermione was roused from her thoughts by her mother's crushing embrace. Her father followed after and Hermione grinned up at the two people that had raised her. Marcus and Jane Granger were two very attractive middle aged muggles and it was clear to see that Hermione was going to look exactly like her mother with her father's curly hair.

"I'm so glad you came, Mum, Dad."

"Of course we came, we wouldn't miss this for the world. It's all so fascinating. Oh look, there are the Weasleys." While her father gestured to the mass of red hair and freckles, her mother smoothed non-existent wrinkles out of her daughter's dress. Hermione was wearing a white eyelet lace dress with red embroidery on it. She had opted for muggle dress under her graduation robes to show that she was proud of her heritage.

As the Weasley family walked over to her, Molly Weasley enfolded her in a tearful hug. Fred and George congratulated her and teased her and Ginny hugged her and giggled next to her while Harry offered up his own congratulations. In the midst of it all, Hermione couldn't bring herself to make eye contact with Ron. The two had only spoken in short, clipped sentences around each other since the day she had found out about Lavender. Lavender had cornered Hermione at one point and had apologized, but went on to say that she and Ron were in love and that the whole school had been expecting this for ages. Hermione found it easier to forgive Lavender than she did her best friend. Ron kept looking at his feet. The whole day Mrs. Weasley kept dropping snide comments to let her son know what she thought of his choice in women. Molly had been planning Ron and Hermione's wedding for years.

"-and then I was thinking we could all go to London for a stay, what do you think, Hermione?" Hermione hadn't even realized that Harry was talking to her, let alone making plans.

"I'm sorry, Harry, I was just thinking too hard. What were you saying?"

"Honestly, if it weren't for thinking I doubt Hermione would have ever gotten into any trouble at all!" laughed Jane Granger.

"I know, she never gave us any trouble at all, except when she thought too hard about a rule and decided it was unfair." Marcus agreed with his wife.

"That's our Hermione, always doing the right thing. She's always been the level-headed one of our group." Harry lovingly put his arm around Hermione's shoulders and Hermione nervously smiled at him. How level headed would he think her when he found out about her drunken romp

with Malfoy?

"So what do you think? Would you want to go to London the first part of July?" Ginny looked at Hermione, eagerly wishing her to say yes.

"Yes, it's going to be so much fun! I can't wait to see all the muggle fashions." Lavender piped up.

"Actually, I've already promised a friend that I'd go see her in Italy."

"What? Who?" Jane Granger was slightly confused.

"Francesca Scarpelli, you remember her from my primary school?"

"Oh, yes! The two of you were such good friends when you were small. I didn't know the two of you had kept up contact after she moved to Italy with her parents. Will you be staying with them? Where do they live?"

Deciding to stick as close to the truth as possible, Hermione replied, "In Napoli. They have a cottage on the beach and since Francesca is graduating as well, they thought it would be nice to have one last hurrah."

'Oh, that's lovely, dear," said Molly Weasley. "Well, when you get back, give us a visit and you and Harry and Ron can all go looking for flats together."

The Weasleys and Harry moved towards the Gryffindor table, ready to nosh on the food that had been prepared for the reception. While Hermione stood talking to her parents, Malfoy moved closer, watching her interact with them with interest. Suddenly Marcus noticed him, "Hello. Aren't you the head boy?"

Sticking out his hand, Draco gave his name. "Draco Malfoy, and yes I'm Head Boy. You must be Hermione's parents. Pleasure to meet you."

"Nice to meet you as well. Are your parents here?"

"No, my father is gone and my mother had an emergency, so she couldn't make it."

"Oh, that's too bad, dear. You should come sit with us." Inwardly, Hermione gulped at her mother's invitation. She almost had apoplexy when Draco agreed. Following them into the Great Hall, Hermione could barely control her breathing. Her parents found Draco to be positively delightful. They had no idea that it was his father who had made them feel so unwelcome in the wizarding world during her second year. Watching her parents be charmed by Malfoy, she prayed that he wouldn't say anything untoward. Hearing her mother's laughter she turned her attention back to the people whose company she was sharing.

"Hermione, I can't believe you never told us about him. He's wonderful." Hermione gave her mother a wilted look.

"Actually, she has very good reason not to have told you anything about me. My father wasn't exactly on the right side of the war we just experienced, which I'm sure you know about, and during my early years at Hogwarts I wasn't exactly kind towards your daughter. However, I do

not share my father's beliefs on interacting with muggles and muggle borns. Hermione is partially to be credited for that since she is the brightest witch of our age and a muggle born to boot. I've experienced a lot of pleasure with her, working together as heads." Hermione didn't miss the emphasis on the word 'pleasure', but her parents didn't think anything was amiss.

Desperate to change the subject, she spoke up. "So, where is Chris? Could he not make it?" Hermione's parents' mood immediately dropped at the mention of her brother. Six years older than Hermione, Christopher Granger was everything his baby sister was not. Always in trouble, often lazy and untrustworthy, Chris' redeeming qualities were that he was a perfect charmer and always fun to be around. That fun often included illegal activities and he often had to be bailed out of trouble by his parents.

"Your brother had some prior engagements that couldn't be ignored." Her mother explained away his absence, but Hermione knew he was probably on a binger somewhere. Because her parents loved her brother, they did their best to help him, but often gave him the benefit of the doubt when he needed a strict hand. It seemed that they had decided early on that Hermione was sensible one and Chris the flaky child and treated them accordingly.

"I think I'm going to get some of this butter beer stuff, does anyone want anything while I'm up?" Hermione's father mercilessly ended the awkward silence that had arisen at the mention of Hermione's brother.

"I think I'll go with you," Jane said, standing. "I want some more of these pumpkin pasties." The two left leaving Hermione and Draco alone.

"So, Granger's got a good-for-naught brother. No wonder you're such an over-achiever, you've got to earn enough accolades for two."

"Oh, shut it Malfoy. I can't believe you! Talking to my parents like you haven't spent the past seventeen years of your life thinking that muggles are inferior! Wipe that smug look off your face, you have no right to look like that."

"Oh, I have every right to look like this, seeing as I fucked you on the Gryffindor table last night, coincidentally enough of which your friends are currently eating on it." Hermione blushed as the memory of being laid out on the table while he pounded into her from behind filled her head.

"Besides," he continued, "I don't think muggles are inferior, I just happen to know that wizarding life is much better. By the way, shagging you on the Gryffindor table, while delightful, was nothing in comparison to shagging you in the potions classroom." Since it had been their last week at Hogwarts, Draco had insisted on shagging in a number of public places. They had shagged in the Astronomy Tower, the Great Hall, potions, transfiguration and arithmancy classrooms, the greenhouse, the quidditch pitch and even the Slytherin common room.

Thinking back on her week, Hermione thought about their encounters and found that rather than being disgusted by them, she actually was quite fond of the memories. Malfoy was a bloody good shag himself and a considerate lover. She found she liked being dominated and he often let her return the favor. She was shocked with herself because she felt like she should come away from the mandatory shags with a sick, used feeling. Instead, she found it annoying. Annoying, only because someone was making her do something for his own benefit and Hermione Granger did not like to be forced to do anything that yielded no practical benefit. But, she reasoned, she was young, healthy and attractive. She should enjoy sex and she would. So

what if the only person willing to try her out also happened to be the most underhanded and cunning? If Ron had been willing to put a little effort into it, he would have found out exactly how good of a girl she could be. Thinking of Ron made something in her chest hurt.

When Ginny had found out about Ron and Lavender, she had been livid, but Hermione had made her promise not to make a scene. Harry had been upset as well, but no where near the fury that Ginny had felt. However, due to Hermione's assurances that she would be okay and that it wasn't a big deal, Lavender and Ron had become grudgingly accepted. Hermione was suddenly glad that she wasn't going to spend a week in London with them. Although she told herself she was over it, she still felt like crying every time she saw Lavender wrap her arms around Ron's broad shoulders. She wondered what was so awful about her that no one wanted to date her. Well, no one but Malfoy, that is and he only wanted to shag her. Throwing herself into her 'relationship' with Malfoy took her mind off of Ron.

Since their bargain began, she slowly began spending more time with Malfoy just because it hurt too much to go to the Gryffindor common room and watch Won-Won and Lav-Lav snog each other. Ginny understood and Harry believed her when she told them she just wanted to stay in her room and study. Spending time with Malfoy meant her brain focused on the unbelievable situation she was in. Maybe Ron didn't see her as a sensual being, but someone did and that someone wanted her badly enough to blackmail her into shagging him. That someone also happened to be most sexually experienced boy at Hogwarts, so Hermione was quite confident in her skills. She's been reading about sex since she was fourteen and Viktor Krum had snogged her senseless the night of the Yule Ball. Viktor had awakened certain things inside of her and she wanted to know more. Desperately hoping that Ron would be the one she could apply her book learning to, she kept waiting for him to make his move. He didn't, and so Draco Malfoy had been the one she used as her practicum.

Her parents came back and Malfoy bid them farewell, but not before asking her to meet him one last time before she left. When her trunk was loaded onto the carriage, she sought out Malfoy. Walking into the wooded area around the entrance to Hogsmeade, she felt two strong arms wrap around her. She pressed against a tree trunk and Malfoy's soft, full lips were on hers, his tongue gaining access to her mouth. The kiss made her moan and her hands reached up to his neck to play with the hair at the nape of his neck. Breaking the kiss, Malfoy stared into her eyes.

"That's to make certain you don't forget our bargain and that it includes no sharing. I'll owl you when I get home. You might want to go shopping, we leave in a week."

"How am I supposed to contact you, though? I don't have an owl." Hermione was still holding onto him and he had his hands possessively resting on her hips.

"You'll need to get one. Maybe we can pick one up in Italy. For now, you'll just have to keep your schedule clear in case I need you." He paused for a moment before stating, "Gods, I'm going to miss this."

Hermione held her breath. "Miss what?" she asked.

"I'm going to miss fucking you on a daily basis," he growled before claiming her mouth again.

As Hermione kissed him back, she was almost certain that he was going to say that he would miss her. The look in his eye made her think that that's what he meant, he just hadn't been able to say it. She wondered to herself why she was disappointed that he didn't.

Chapter 4: Italy

At eight am July 1st, Draco stood outside of the Granger's house, waiting on Hermione to open the door. He didn't know why, but he was nervous. In the week between graduation and their holiday, he had met with her twice. Once in the Leaky Cauldron under assumed aliases and once in his flat in London. When Hermione had left his flat in London she had forgotten her hairbrush. Draco kept in on the sink in his bathroom because it made him feel better. Every other night in the past week, he had spent the moments before bed looking at pictures of her. He kept the one of her on the window seat in their old common room with him at all times and he wanked off to the one of her masturbating in his house tie. He could have easily found entertainment elsewhere, but for some reason he wanted only Hermione. For awhile he thought that maybe she had put a love spell on him. That wouldn't have been true though, because if he was under the effects of a love spell he would be willing to do anything for her, including give her the negatives of those damning photos. As it was, he was willing to do almost anything to GET her, not do anything FOR her.

When the door finally opened he was looking at a flushed Hermione who was wheeling one large suitcase and had a garment bag thrown over her shoulder. Taking both items he shrunk them and put them in his pocket.

"Where are your parents?" he asked, curiously looking in her front door. She stepped back to let him in and he surveyed the stylish, comfortable setting. The Grangers it seemed were definitely teetering on the edge of upper class and for some reason this pleased Draco.

"They had to leave last night to help my brother with something in Liverpool." She was watching him walk around her living room and he knew what she was thinking. He was invading her private space. This was sacred to her, it was where she had grown up. Thinking of a two year old Granger toddling around this living room almost made him grin.

"Well, where's the rest of your stuff and I'll shrink it as well."

"What do you mean, 'the rest'? That's all I've got."

"I thought I told you to go shopping," he said. If that was all the clothing she was taking, that simply wouldn't do.

"I did! How much clothing do you honestly think I'll need? It's only three weeks."

Sighing, Draco put his head in his hands. He'd just have to take her shopping once they got there. He dearly hoped she had something suitable for dinner tonight in the garment bag.

"Lock your front door," he told her. "And then come here." Hermione did as she was told, stopping just in front of him. He closed the distance between them and wrapped his arms around her waist. "Put your arms around me, and hold on." Bending down to kiss her he apparated them both.

When the squeezing sensation finally stopped, Hermione broke away from him and teetered backwards.

"Why did you do that? It's dangerous to apparate so far!" Draco just grinned at her. He enjoyed having her yell at him the way she used to yell at Potter and Weasley. It made him feel good to get her riled up. He listened to her rant a few more moments before she suddenly trailed off taking in her surroundings. She was standing on a beautiful, private beach in front of a beautiful white house with a gorgeous garden in front. Watching her jaw drop, Draco felt very smug. He was happy that he could stop her infamous mouth with one of his houses.

The Italian Villa was made in the neo-classical style and actually rather small in comparison to Malfoy Manor, but a family of five could live quite lavishly in the house's five bedrooms. Taking Hermione's hand, Draco pulled her along the pathway up to the house. Opening the door, he led her into the tiled entry way and watched her gaze at her surroundings in wonder.

"This is your family's vacation home? It's beautiful!"

"Well, my great-grandfather had this house built in the late nineteenth century because Castel dell'Ovo was too drafty to stay in and it made him more money as a tourist attraction."

"You mean to tell me that your family owns the Castle of the Egg? The one that Virgil supposedly built around an egg?"

"Of course we own it. It's stayed in the family. Virgil, although a great poet in the muggle world, was actually a brilliant sorcerer and wizarding engineer. The Castle is not far away, it's about a mile down the beach to Borgo Marinaro, the town we'll be gathering supplies in. There's a disillusionment charm around this property, so no muggles will bother us. Borgo Marinaro actually has a rather large wizarding population, so it won't be so bad while we're here."

Moving up the stairs, Hermione followed Draco into the master bedroom. Decorated in midnight blue and silver, the room had a large, king-sized bed in the middle with two large closets on either side of it. There were more pillows arranged on the bed than Hermione had probably ever owned in her lifetime. Watching her take in her surroundings, Draco couldn't help but notice how well she seemed to fit in the room. She may not have been born into high society, she had enough social grace that she fit into well. She had only remarked on the home's beauty and history, not the price range.

Removing both his and her suitcases from his pocket, he turned them back to their correct size and summoned a house-elf to have the items put away in the closets. Hermione had just come back in from inspecting the ridiculously large bathroom and he stared at her, suddenly feeling awkward. What did one do when on vacation with a lover? Clearing his throat, he asked, "What would you like to do first?"

"Well, to be perfectly honest, I'd like to take a swim. The water is beautiful."

"Okay, find your bathing suit and let's go." Hermione walked over to the closet and located the little dresser inside and extracted not only her bikini, but Draco's swim shorts as well. Bringing them both out, she handed Draco his shorts and smiled at him shyly before removing her clothes. He'd seen her do it a thousand times, but Draco still got hard watching her strip. Deciding that he didn't want their first time in this bedroom to be a quickie he walked into the bathroom to change, away from her tantalizing body.

When he emerged again he found her dressed in a black halter top bikini with a yellow and orange patterned sarong wrapped around her waist, accentuating her hips. She was barefoot and that somehow made her seem fragile. Handing him a towel, she allowed herself to be led to

the waterfront, where they dropped their belongings on the shoreline and dove for the water.

Draco was surprised to find that Hermione was actually quite an accomplished swimmer. She had never shown any athletic tendencies while at Hogwarts, so he often wondered what she did to give her such fine leg muscles. They swam around each other for awhile before Draco finally reached out and grabbed her waist, pulling her to him. Taking her out to where he knew she couldn't touch, he turned her to face him, wrapping her legs around his waist.

"If you weren't here with me, where would you be right now?" he asked as the ocean's current lazily rocked them back and forth, rubbing them against one another's bodies.

"Probably at home, going over my resume or in London with Harry and Ginny." He noticed that she left Ron and Lavender out. He knew she still harbored some feelings for the redheaded git and he wished it didn't bother him.

"So you would either be increasing your bookworm status or bored to tears in Diagon Alley? Well, I'd say it's pretty lucky that you came along then. Hot sex on a secluded beach sounds much better." She giggled and held onto him as a particularly large wave almost upset them.

"What about you?" she asked, "What would you be doing?"

"Probably listening to Blaise Zabini talk about his latest virgin or watching Crabbe and Goyle make eyes at each while desperately attempting to look as heterosexual as possible. Or I might be at Club Verde getting my dick sucked by whichever witch wants a shot at being the next Mrs. Malfoy." If Hermione was bothered by his last statement, she didn't show it.

"So Crabbe and Goyle are together? While odd, I find that strangely sweet." She smiled at him and it was almost one of the real ones that she reserved only for Harry, Ron and Ginny.

"Yes, they've been 'experimenting' since fourth year and after a particularly nasty incident involving Goyle and Smith from Hufflepuff, are now quite happily committed to one another." Draco pulled Hermione to him and sucked at the juncture of her shoulder and neck whilst shuddering at the memories of nights when the two forgot to put up a silencing charm in the dormitories.

Giving a slight giggle, Hermione said, "Well at least somebody found true love." Draco didn't explore her statement further and they spent the rest of the morning swimming or resting on the beach in the sunshine. A house elf brought them lunch and cocktails, although Draco noticed that Hermione was exceedingly careful not to over imbibe.

At about four thirty in the afternoon, they went back to the house and Draco insisted on taking a shower together. Enjoying the sensation of her body against his as they had sex, he relished the thought of spending the next three weeks with her. When they were done, she picked out a flirty, black dress to wear and he wore a black button-up shirt that matched. They went out to eat and then went dancing at a wizard night club he knew about. Hermione was surprised at how adept he was on his feet and he was pleased to see a number of other men checking her out. He'd always loved to make others jealous.

When they arrived back at the house, Hermione took her pumps off her aching feet and fell backwards on the bed with her delicate calves dangling over the edge. He removed his shoes and shirt before joining her by laying himself down on top of her deliciously soft curves.

"I have to say, that was a truly enjoyable day," she smiled up at him.

"You mean it wasn't pure torture? I have to say that you're probably the best accessory I've ever brought on holiday." He began to slowly kiss his way down her neck, undoing the tie in the back of the dress. He stopped when he felt her stiffen under him.

"Is that all I am to you? Some 'accessory' to heighten the enjoyment of a good time?" Crap. He'd have to tread carefully.

"No, but don't pretend you came here just because I asked. You wouldn't be here if I hadn't blackmailed you," he said accusingly.

"And why are you still blackmailing me? Couldn't you have just found some stupid, pure blooded slut to come along with you? There were plenty of girls in that club tonight who would have gone home with you in a heartbeat. Why me?"

And here Draco got nervous because he couldn't let her know what she did to him. He couldn't let her know how important she was becoming to him. He couldn't tell her the real reason that he didn't want any other girl, and hadn't since the first night they'd shagged. He couldn't tell her, 'Because they're not you' and have her bask in the glory of the power she held over him. Instead he gave her the reason he'd first decided that shagging her was fun.

"I want you because you're a bloody good shag and because I know you aren't trying to trick me into impregnating you so that you can get half my money. When you have an orgasm, I know it isn't fake just to stoke my ego and when you suck my dick I know it's because you want to get me off. You of all people have every reason to just lay there under me and let me get off twice a week and you don't; you're an active participant. Shagging you is fun and I don't have to constantly be on the watch or worry that you want to tie me down."

"Not that tying you to the bed hasn't crossed my mind," she said wickedly and he smirked back at her. Bondage was one area that they hadn't gotten very far into and he was glad she was up for it. Suddenly, a thought occurred to him: how far exactly had she gone with anyone else before he made the rule about no sharing. She'd been a virgin that fateful night, but she had a voracious sexual appetite. Where had she learned half of that?

"Hermione," he tested saying her name out loud and found he liked it. "How many people have you been with other than me?"

She looked at him oddly before answering, "You know I've only ever been with you."

"No, I mean how many guys have you snogged and how far have you gotten with each of them?"

"I really fail to see how this is ANY of your business," she replied turning pink.

"It isn't, but I'd appreciate it if you'd tell me for research purposes."

"Fine. I got my first kiss when I was thirteen from a muggle boy called Stephen Musgrave. In fourth year, Viktor Krum and I did a lot of snogging and touching, but it always stayed above the waist and over the bra. In sixth year, I was mauled by Cormac MacLaggen at Professor

Slughorn's party and then in seventh Ron kissed me a few times under the tree by the lake and then came you." Draco noticed how her voice quavered slightly when it came to Weasley. Seriously, she needed to forget about that prat. Daphne Greengrass had slept with him in sixth year and informed everyone that not only was he an oaf on the quidditch field, he was also an oaf in bed. Hermione would have been completely wasted on him.

"So, I'm the only man to have ever seen you naked?" he asked, pulling the top of her dress down to bring her perfectly rounded breast into view. Running his hand over her mounds, he played with her dusky pink nipples and watched them harden into peaks. Pulling her dress all the way off her body he followed the dip between her rib cage and hip with his broad hand, exploring every possible curve of her body, memorizing it.

"Other than a doctor, yes," she breathed as her eyes began to darken. Reaching up to his hair, Hermione threaded her hands through the white blonde locks before smoothing her hands down his chest. Her cool fingers traced his muscles before reaching around to his back to dig her nails in as she brought them from his shoulders down to his hips making thin red lines appear on his pale skin.

"Then how is it that you're so bloody good at this?" he hissed, grinding his erection into the juncture of her thighs.

"The same way I get good at everything: I do research and I have a thirst for knowledge."

Draco frowned. "How can you learn about sex from a book? I'll buy that whole 'thirst for knowledge' bit because you certainly were eager that night, but you can only go so far with words on a page."

"Well, it seems to be good enough to get you off," she replied. "How about I give you an example?"

"Be my guest," he smirked.

Hermione flipped him so that she was on top, straddling him. She leaned forward and kissed him very gently before moving her lips down his neck, to his shoulders and onto his chest. Sliding off the bed she let her dress fall to her ankles and stepped out of it leaving her in nothing but a black thong. Kneeling before the bed, she reached up to his pants and unzipped the black, expensive piece of clothing, pulling the fly apart to expose his hips and the green satin boxers he'd worn that day. Trailing her tongue of his hip bones, she lowered both his pants and his boxers until his cock sprang free, bouncing in her face.

"When performing felatio, it is always important to be well hydrated," she began, accioing a bottle of water, she took a drink from the frigid bottle and then blew her cold breath on Draco's proud, erect organ. His cock twitched and he held her smoldering gaze as he watched her lick stray drops of water from her red lips. "When beginning, start with the head of the penis, kissing and licking your way around the sensitive, textured skin."

Draco hissed as Hermione caressed the head of his cock with her lips, not actually kissing it. She then gave the very tip an open mouth kiss, swirling her tongue around the ridge at the head of his organ. Slowly, she began to lubricate the head with her saliva, taking more into the hot wet cavern of her mouth.

"Take your hand and wrap it around the length of your partner's shaft lightly, using soft, gentle strokes to stimulate him." Hermione did as she said, while still pressing soft gentle kisses to the head. "Slowly take more into your mouth, only about an inch or so at a time. Use you tongue and lips to gently massage what you can fit of your partner in your mouth."

Using long, lazy strokes around him, Hermione licked and sucked at Draco while keeping a steady rhythm with her hand. Draco was going absolutely insane. There was something highly erotic about her breathy, know-it-all voice giving him a play-by-play of what was happening to his cock. He put one hand into her hair and tried to push her head closer, but she stopped him.

"When you are ready, relax the back the back of your throat and insert your partner as far back as you are able." Draco gasped as the head of his manhood and more went down the impossibly tight back of her throat. The squeezing action of her throat as she pushed and pulled his member back down and out again brought him almost to his climax, before she stopped and spoke again. Keeping her lips against his penis so that he could feel the vibrations, she purred, "This is called deep throating."

Draco was sweating and silently begging her to keep doing what she was doing and also to just let him finish already. She continued to suck at him and use her hands and lips to create a variety of sensations around his most sensitive organ. He could feel his orgasm slowly building and when his ball sac seized, she pressed her thumb at the base of his penis and sucked like a hoover vacuum. His orgasm hit him and he saw stars as pleasure waves wracked his body. She realized the pressure of her thumb and his semen shot out, covering her chest and breasts. She pumped her hand while quietly speaking.

"When your partner is close to orgasm, place slight pressure at the base of his penis. This will prevent the sperm from escaping as quickly and prolong his orgasm. When you are ready, suckle him in earnest before letting go and allow him to ejaculate onto your chest. Most men find this to be a pleasurable sight and many women enjoy the feel of semen on their skin."

Draco lay, spent on the bed, his pants around his ankles and he couldn't tear his eyes away from the little minx in front of him. Eyes darkened with lust, he could tell that she had gotten aroused by having that much control over him and her book had been correct; he had never seen a more erotic sight than Hermione Granger, with her lips swollen and nipples hard, covered in his cum.

Chapter 5: Intimacy Defined

Hello all! I just wanted to thank everyone who has left a review! You guys have completely humbled me! I hope this chapter is to your liking. Thanks especially to tikigirl who left the most wonderful, kind words I've ever heard about my writing. Enjoy!

Looking at herself in the mirror, Hermione didn't recognize the witch staring back at her. She was draped in yards of forest green silk that clung to her curves in a wispy lovers caress. The delicately made dress was scandalous in that it covered her body, but left nothing to the imagination. All it would take was one strong wind or one slight push from a man's hand and the dress would fall off of her. Her curls were pulled back at the sides, framing her face in a way that brought attention to her large, honey brown eyes. The shoes she wore were strappy heels that brought attention to her delicate ankles and perfectly shaped calves. Enthralled with what she

was seeing, she allowed Madame Miglione to turn her this way and that, pinning the dress so that it was tailored to specifically fit her curves.

"We'll take this one, definitely," Draco told the designer in Italian. "I also want the two blue ones and the yellow sun dress. I didn't like the purple monstrosity, but I loved the brown duster and the red cocktail dress. Make sure you send at least seven pairs of shoes over, as well. I'm tired of looking at the ones she has." If he noticed Hermione's indignant glare, he didn't show it. This was far too much fun. He'd taken her shopping in Milan to all the famous wizarding design houses. At first she had created a fuss, insisting that he shouldn't buy her clothing and that she wouldn't let him. He told her that he was buying it for her whether she wanted him to or not and that he would stun her if necessary to put the dresses on her. He liked picking out what she wore. It increased the ever increasing addictive feeling of intimacy he sought after. Her wardrobe was no longer a surprise to him because not only had he been there when it was purchased, he had picked it out as well.

The middle aged witch pulled Hermione behind the dressing curtain while he settled the bill. As he signed the sale slip authorizing the galleons to be taken out of his account in Gringotts, he overheard the Madame speaking to Hermione.

"Step out of those, cara, and we'll box them up for you."

"But I don't want these shoes, they hurt my feet," Hermione whispered to the witch.

"I know, cara, but sometimes we have to do things we don't want to please our husbands." Draco would have paid money to see the look on Hermione's face. She could deny that she was married to him, but that would mean that they would believe she was his mistress, his high paid whore. She wisely kept her mouth shut.

She emerged from the dressing room in her pale blue sundress and he wrapped his arm around her waist, gripping her hip and they began their walk down the street. They'd been in Milan for two days and would go back to Napoli that evening to continue their holiday.

"Not That I'm not grateful, Draco, but why did you buy me all of these clothes?" Hermione had become comfortable walking next to him and they had started using each other's first names. Draco decided that he liked this turn of events very much.

"I bought you these clothes for a number of reasons. First, you're a beautiful witch and you should play that up by dressing accordingly. I think you got so immersed in being the brains of your little group that you forgot that you were female. Second, you are being seen with me and I can't have you looking like a pauper while I'm dressed in impeccable taste. I told you to go shopping and you packed like we were going away for the weekend and not the better part of a month. Third, I like picking out what you wear."

"For you, that little outburst was almost sweet." She smiled up at him before her face turned serious. "I can't keep them, though."

"What do you mean you can't keep them?" he demanded.

"How am I going to explain to my parents and friends how I was able to afford all of this? I've already lied to them enough. They know I don't have the money and it's not as if I can announce that not only have I been shagging you for the past six months, but our 'relationship' has

progressed to the point where you feel it necessary to buy me clothes. Can't you give these to your mother?"

"No, I can't," he replied testily. "If you're that worried about it, tell them that your friend gave them to you or tell them that they're knock-offs of the actual designers. I doubt any of them would be able to tell the real thing if you used it to tie their mouths shut. Besides, I want to see you actually wear those and it isn't as if I bought you all that much. You're acting like I spent a bloody fortune."

"But you did spend a bloody fortune! You spent more on clothes these past two days than I anticipate spending on rent in the next year."

"What hovel are you planning on living in, exactly?"

"I don't know if I'll be there yet, but I've had my eye on the flat above Flourish & Blot's in Diagon Alley. And before you start, it isn't a hovel!"

"You can't live there! The whole place is filled with common, filthy, degenerates. You'll have to find something in the Hyde Park area, closer to me."

"I'm touched by your arrogance. I can't afford to live in the neighborhood you live in and Diagon Alley is perfectly safe."

"Just what job were you planning on getting that you couldn't afford to live someplace nicer? I thought you were going to work for the ministry."

"I am. I've sent out resumes and so far the department of Control of Magical Creatures and the department of Mysteries have asked me to meet with them. However, an entry level salary will only pay so much and I need to save my money so that I can eventually move into one of those posh flats on your end of town. Until then, you'll just have to come see me in my little Diagon Alley 'hovel'."

Draco liked that she insinuated that he could visit her. He liked being let into her personal space. However, there were far too many prying eyes in Diagon Alley and as it stood, they still couldn't be seen together. He was beginning to wonder why. Yes, he had many incriminating photos of her, but was that really what was keeping her here? He knew she enjoyed spending time with him, but if he didn't have those pictures, would she be here at all? She was the kind of person who made the best of every situation, so while he knew she was enjoying herself, he couldn't be sure if she was enjoying herself the same way she did when she was with Potter and the Weaslette.

What was even more pressing was the fact that he wanted her to want to be there. When she laughed at something he said, it was genuine and he loved to hear her beautiful laughter. She could make him laugh as well and for that reason, he was growing increasingly attached to her. Suddenly something she said struck him. She'd referred to what they had going as a relationship. She'd meant it jokingly of course, but she'd still said it. That was what he wanted from her. He wanted a relationship. He wanted to be the only one she dated and he wanted to walk like this with her in public back in England. He didn't want Dean Thomas or Oliver Wood chasing after her now that she and the weasel were through. They needed to know that she was taken. The problem was, how did he go about approaching this with her? Since his father's demise, he no longer had to worry about blood status. He'd held that particular prejudice until it

became impossible to deny that the muggle borns at his school only had disadvantages in a cultural sense and not in their capabilities. He was free to pursue whomever he chose.

Hermione on the other hand had a lot to lose by being seen with him. Her friends would turn against her, people would assume that she was a slag and she had a lot more to answer for by being seen with him. He would take flak from the upper-crust of society, but he had enough money that he didn't have to care about whom he offended. Besides, for the people who truly mattered, being seen with her would increase his status and prove that just because his father had been evil, that didn't mean he was as well. His mother didn't care who he dated as long as the witch didn't do anything to disgrace the Malfoy name. Hermione was the epitome of class and grace, so he had nothing to worry about. What he did have to worry about was how he was going to finagle her compliance in this matter. Typically, whenever he wanted something, he went out and bought it. How did one go about buying a relationship?

When they got back to the house in Napoli, Hermione sighed in relief and informed him that she wanted to take a bath. Letting go of her, he watched her walk into the bathroom and listened for the sound of running water. Smelling the familiar scent of lavender, he slunk into the bath just to take a quick look. Walking in, he saw her with her long curls piled on top of her head and her eyes closed in blissful relaxation. Quietly, he slipped back out of the room, picked up his camera and made his way back in the room. The bubbles covered just the tops of her breasts and when she took a breath, he could see their rosy tips peaking out at him. Not bothering with a flash, he took her picture. She didn't even notice. Giving in to temptation, he stripped and slid into the other side of the enormous tub, taking great care to not alert her to his presence. By the time the water magically shut off, he was standing directly in front of her.

Hermione gasped when she felt his hands pull her from her sitting position onto his lap, facing him with her legs draped on either side of him. The bath oil made their skin deliciously slippery and heightened the sensations they created when they rubbed together. Draco closed his eyes as Hermione lightly kissed his forehead, eyebrows, eyelids and his nose. His cock was flirting with her entrance, but never actually penetrating her.

"As much as I love seeing you in those clothes, nothing compares to what you look like naked. Gods, Hermione, how did you manage to keep this body a secret for so long?"

"It's easy. I hid it behind a book. Not many people are willing to look in a book for something sexy." He noticed she sounded slightly wistful and could tell that she still didn't fully realize how incredibly attractive she was. If she walked down Diagon Alley in the yellow sundress he'd bought her in Milan, she would have to have a bodyguard just to make it into Florian Fortescue's ice cream parlour.

"You looked in a book for something sexy, and you learned quite well, I might add. Is there anything books didn't teach you?" He closed his eyes as she ran her hands over his body. When he opened them, she wasn't looking at his face, but at his chest with rapt interest. She had the same look on her face that she often got when she studied something in potions or herbology. He never truly appreciated how beautiful she was until that moment.

"They never taught how wonderful the human body truly is or how exquisite it would feel. I'd had an orgasm before, because I'd read about masturbation and its different methods, but it never prepared me for what it felt like to come with another person." She finally looked up into his eyes and smiled at what she saw in them. Tentatively, she asked, "Can we try something?"

"Anything," he whispered. He'd never felt so treasured in his life. No one had ever taken this much interest in him before.

Without a word, she impaled herself on him, wrapping her legs around his waist so that their pelvises were pressed against each other. The water around them sloshed and moved against their skin, every jostle reminding Draco of how intimately connected they were.

"I want you to center your energy in the base of your back. Don't think, just feel. Focus your mind on all of your magical energy flowing to that point." As she spoke, Hermione set a slow rhythm, rocking them so that while Draco never pulled out of her, he was still moving inside her. Short, sweet, shallow thrusts that somehow made things more intense than the hammering into her he normally did. "Don't think about anything other than the fact that what we're doing is sacred. It's an affirmation of life, a way to create, an expression of love and what makes us human."

Hermione continued rocking her hips in a steady pace and Draco responded with his own upward thrusts. In, out, up and down, they moved, staring into each other's eyes. Her legs were wrapped around his waist, not in a vise like grip, but firmly, letting him know that they wouldn't be coming down anytime soon. Draco supported her bum with one arm and the buoyancy of the water made that job very simple. He was crouched in a squatting position in the tub so that only their shoulders and heads were above the water. His other arm was around her shoulders, holding her to him, while both of her arms were around his neck and shoulders, her hands lovingly caressing the skin she found. He did as she instructed and focused his magical energy at the base of his spine. Soon, he began to feel a warm tingling all around his pelvis. It made him want to thrust into her welcoming body with abandon but he held back.

He knew she was feeling the same thing when she gasped and took his face in her hands, kissing him on the mouth, almost reverently. The tingling sensation heightened and suddenly he realized that he could feel every part of her. Hot, wet and tight, he felt the very essence of what made her female. It reached out to him, surrounding them. The rhythm continued, slowly stroking each of them in their most intimate of places and the magic began to build around them. He felt something outside of his own pleasure and realized that he could feel her pleasure as well. He felt it when he hit the right spot in her channel, when he brushed her clit and he felt her womb contract when she began to feel intense pleasure.

She kept eye-contact with him as her shapely hips moved almost imperceptibly, yet causing him the most exquisite pleasure he'd ever felt in his entire life. He felt whole.

"Right now, you are whole," Hermione said as if reading his thoughts. "According to some traditions, we are whole right now because we are connected in the most ancient and primitive way possible. You aren't whole unless you connect with another human being." Her words heightened his arousal and sounded far away due to the magic. He could feel the steady rhythm of her heart. They were both teetering on the edge of orgasm and had been for almost half an hour now. Instead of being frantic for release, Draco never wanted the feeling to end. Staring into her large doe eyes, he realized that he could sense her feelings as well. She too, felt whole and the wealth of contentment washing off of her at being with him, doing this, took his breath away. The amount of magic swirling around them made thinking both difficult and easier than it had ever been before in his life. The water continued to move around them and he was vaguely aware that most of the bubbles in the bath were gone. All he cared about was her face and the fact that he felt like they were the center of the universe at the moment. Light and colors swirled around him as he felt the magic pull through him the day his wand had chosen him at

Ollivander's when he was eleven. He felt that same sense of rightness as he moved inside her wet channel, every so often feeling her womb and wondering what it would feel like to put a child there.

Suddenly, he felt the heat in the room rise almost twenty degrees and Hermione clung to him frantically. They continued their undulations as the shock of orgasm rode through them both. For Draco it felt like the stream of sperm flowing out of him would never stop and if Hermione's low moan of delight as she planted herself firmly over his member was any indication, she never wanted it to. He filled her with his essence and could feel, through the connection, her womb contract as he sprayed his release over its walls. For the first time in his life, Draco Malfoy had just made love.

Coming down from the magical high, he was exhausted, delirious, sated and ecstatic. As trite as it was to say, he never knew that it could be that good. Rising up out of the water, he carried her, still impaled on him, to the bedroom, where spelled them dry before laying down next to her. He'd always been extremely cautious with other witches when it came to protection, but he didn't use the protection spell on her and hoped she was too sleepily sated to notice. She had a satisfied grin on her face as he pulled her to him. All he could think about was that his sperm was in her womb and if it took root, then she would forever be tied to him. Pulling her to his chest, he turned out the lights and felt her snuggle against him, releasing a happy sigh.

"G'night," she mumbled before drifting off to sleep. That simple gesture of acceptance of what they'd done made up his mind. He could never let her go and he would do whatever it took to keep her.

Chapter 6: What Would You Do?

Here's the next chapter you guys! Thank you again to all my kind reviewers, especially the ones who have stayed with me through all my stories. You guys are WONDERFUL!

Looking around the room, Hermione made certain that they hadn't left anything important. She had checked for Draco as well, even though it was his house and he could return to it anytime he wanted. It just seemed like the polite thing to do. The past three weeks had been far more wonderful than she had imagined. She had envisioned spending three weeks feeling like Malfoy's inferior love-slave. Instead she had spent three weeks in either heated debate in bed having mind-blowing sex. She knew it was only temporary and that nothing they shared actually meant anything, and she preferred it that way. If she'd been in an actual relationship she would have had to worry about the other person's feelings and she would have been constantly plagued with questions of 'Where is this going?' or 'How long can this last?' All the restrictions that Malfoy put on their arrangement weren't based on any kind of emotional feeling; rather he was just spoiled and didn't want anyone to mess up his arrangement. At least that's what she thought.

A few times, Hermione had caught him looking at her with a mixture of lust and panic. She already knew how much he enjoyed the little things she did for him out of habit. He obviously had never encountered much affection before in his life and common courtesy amongst friends seemed to be a rarity as well. His constant need to touch her, while at first annoying, she now found endearing. It was almost as if he needed reassurance. She found that laughable because whenever she thought of Malfoy, unsure never crept into her list of adjectives. Cocky, self-

centered and egotistical, yes; but unsure? She couldn't reconcile herself to the thought.

As she finished her packing, the object of her thoughts entered the room. He looked hungrily at her for a few moments before speaking. "Are you ready to go back?" He sounded almost sad. She didn't know why. It wasn't as if he wouldn't get to continue shagging her once they left. He was probably itching to get another girl soon because she'd never known him to be monogamous for this long. For some reason the thought of it made her sad. Although she'd been blackmailed, she'd enjoyed her first experiences with sex and found she had grown sentimentally attached to him. Leaving him would be like leaving her entire childhood behind.

When she nodded to him that she was ready to leave, he walked towards her and put his hands on her hips, by now a familiar gesture, and kissing her, apparated them both back to her parents' front steps. Still looking into his eyes, she didn't notice that anything was wrong until she saw Draco looking at her front door in concern.

"Were your parents selling your house before we left?" he asked, confused.

Whipping around, Hermione didn't bother answering him, she just pushed past the SOLD sign on the front door to find her parents in a flurry of packing. "Mum? What's going on? What's happened?"

Looking at her mother's tear stained face broke Hermione's heart. Jane Granger couldn't even speak, she just burst into more tears and hugged her daughter. Marcus Granger came in, and completely disregarding Draco, tugged Hermione into the living room to sit on the lounge.

"Hermione, I don't have much time to tell you this and it's going to come as bit of a shock, but please try to bear with me." Mr. Granger took a deep breath before continuing. "I know that you are aware that your brother has never been the kind of person you are and that he often gets himself into trouble that he can't get out of on his own." When Hermione nodded mutely, her father continued, doing his best to keep his voice steady. "Hermione, your brother has been addicted to heroin and cocaine for quite some time now and he's gotten very deeply into debt with the wrong sorts of people. About a month ago, we gave him most of our savings and took out a loan against the practice to settle with the people he owed money to and he used that money to gamble and get more drugs. He's sick and he needs help."

"No, Dad, he needs to have his face slapped! Why does losing the practice have anything to do with you guys selling the house? What's happening?" At her daughter's outburst, Jane began to sob even harder.

"He owes double the money he did before," she told her daughter. "If he doesn't pay it back by Friday, they'll kill him Hermione!" Hermione's blood turned cold. She loved her brother, despite all the trouble he caused. He'd always defended her against bullies in grammar school and he was the best storyteller she'd ever met. Unfortunately his bad days were as awful as his good days were wonderful.

"How much does he owe?" she asked, not wanting to know.

"Close to a million pounds," her father stated numbly. Hermione sucked in her breath. Their house was at best worth 250,000 pounds.

"What else are you selling to get the money?"

"We've sold both our cars, your mother's jewelry and your Uncle David can loan us another hundred thousand, but we're still so short. We barely have half the amount he needs and we can't take out another loan from the bank. We're hoping that they'll accept what we've got as a down payment, but the Russian mafia isn't known for its mercy. Please try to understand, Mione, he's our son. We'd do the same thing for you."

"What about the police? Haven't you called them?"

"The second we do, Chris will be dead, they've already told us. Even if Chris turns himself in, they've threatened to kill us in retaliation."

Hermione wanted to throw up. 'Where will you live?' she asked

"Your Aunt Clara has offered to let us stay with her until we can get things sorted out. I'm sorry we won't be able to help you with your flat like, we promised. You've got enough saved though, that you should be fine."

"You can have my savings for Chris," she stated. "I'm not going to let him die. I'll just sleep on somebody's floor until I've got enough to get a flat again. I have my Hogwarts ring that should be worth some money and I've got the pearls that Gran gave me for my birthday two years ago. We'll figure this out, Mum, I promise."

"Don't be ridiculous, Hermione, you won't be sleeping on anyone's floor. You're coming to live with me in my flat." Seemingly for the first time, Hermione's parents noticed that Draco was standing behind their daughter in their recently sold living room.

"Hermione, I'm so sorry. I didn't even realize that you'd brought your beau home. How awful you must think us, Draco, is it?" Hermione blushed at the reference her mother made. However, it wasn't as if she could correct her. 'Oh no, Mum, Draco and I are just shagging' would go over like a lead balloon in her father's house.

"Yes, Draco is my name, Mrs. Granger. I met up with Hermione and her friend, Miss Scarpelli, while they were in Milan and offered to escort her home when it was time. I wonder, could I speak with your daughter alone for a few moments?"

"Of course dear, why don't the two of you go up to her bedroom to talk? Marcus and I have more packing to do. Again, I'm so sorry you had to listen to all of this." The pretty older woman gave him a watery smile and returned to the task of putting her possessions into marked boxes.

Pulling Draco up the stairs, Hermione hesitated a moment before drawing him into her childhood bedroom. Instead of being decorated in red and gold like Draco had imagined, it was instead decorated with a light, pastel floral pattern that spoke of her gentle heritage. There was a teddy bear and a stuffed elephant on her bed and Crookshanks, her mangy ginger tabby cat was curled at the foot of her bed. Hermione felt slightly uncomfortable allowing Draco into a place that not even Harry and Ron had seen, but she sat down on her bed, inviting him to do the same. There were bigger issues at stake here than her pride.

"What do you need to talk about?" She knew she was snappish, but she didn't care.

"How much money do you need?" he asked, his grey eyes boring into hers.

"It translates to roughly half a million galleons." I don't know how we're going to do it," she moaned.

"I'll loan it to you," he had assumed the cold, arrogant mask that he wore to hide his emotions.

What do you want in return?" She waited a few moments before hesitantly asking the question.

"As Malfoy heir, I'm expected to attend various dinners and galas and invariably I'll need a date on my arm. I don't want to ask any witch in society because she'll assume that I'm interested in her as a potential wife. I could contact an escort agency, but that will cost me two hundred galleons per event. You're already bound to me at least twice a week for sexual favors, but if I want more I might have to look elsewhere, which will most likely lead me to the escort agency again, costing me more money on some random bint who may or may not be good in the sack. If I'm going to pay three hundred pounds for a shag, I at least want it to be good. Furthermore, I need reinstating into the ministry's good graces. Being seen with you, while damning me in the pureblood community, would raise my social status with the rest of the wizarding world. Let's face it, the pure blooded society is so small now, that no one cares what they think. If you'll agree to pose as my girlfriend and shag whenever I want it until this is paid off, I'll give you the money and when it's all over, we'll go back to our daily lives as if nothing had ever happened. Your parents can keep their house and their practice and your worthless brother can keep his life."

"I'll do it." Hermione didn't care that he'd essentially offered her a situation in which she was his personal whore or that he'd called her brother worthless. All she cared about was the fact that her family wouldn't be destitute. Her brother deserved many things, but right now he didn't deserve to die. She knew that she was selling herself, but by now that was nothing new. Embarrassing pictures were one thing. She could eventually overcome the shame of those pictures give or take a few years. She couldn't get over watching her parents sell off all their possessions only to have their son killed.

As soon as the words were out of her mouth, Draco nodded and went to go downstairs to talk her father. She thought she caught the gleam of something akin to triumph in his eyes. "I'll discuss it with your parents and see who needs to get the appropriate money."

"Wait!" She didn't know why, but she was about to take a gamble. Hermione Granger never went into a situation without some modicum of power. "If I agree to this, I know you'll continue your stance of not sharing. If I'm going to sell myself to you, I want to be the only one doing. The exclusiveness runs both ways."

"Done," he said, without an ounce of emotion. Hermione couldn't quite place the look in his eyes as he stared into hers a moment before continuing downstairs to her parents. Sitting on her childhood bed, it seemed surreal to think that only moments ago she'd been in danger of losing the place she'd called home all her life. For the first time since waking up that morning, she was glad that Malfoy had taken those pictures.

Chapter 7: Meet The Potters

It had been a long and tiring day for Draco. He'd used his resources to track down the man who had purchased the Granger's home and offered him double for the house. He then used some of his more unsavory contacts to find out who to pay so that Chris Granger didn't have his

unworthy head cut off. Draco had met with the Russian muggle and paid him, along with a warning to never sell or do business with the boy again. He had his contacts hunt down all of Mrs. Granger's jewelry and returned it to her, also paying off their bank loan and reinstating their savings. It was as if they had never come into contact with the Russian mob. It was an exorbitant amount of money for the Grangers, but Malfoy barely noticed it was gone. He would have paid ten times that amount to make sure that he got to keep Hermione.

They had agreed to move in together and slowly introduce their relationship to wizarding society. She wanted to tell scar head and the weaslette first, along with Loony Lovegood and Neville Longbottom. He couldn't wait for that particular blow-out. However, he would endure their accusations because it would put a stop to the weaslette's constant attempts at match making and ill-conceived plans to get her brother to dump Lavender and go out with Hermione. The thought that Hermione might have been party to those plans had she not been bound to him made his blood boil. He shouldn't care what she thought, but he did. She was honest and stood by her promises, but he wanted her to be as happy about their arrangement as he was. Other than Ron she had no real romantic feelings towards anyone as far as he knew, and he was quite certain that her feelings towards the red head were fading.

Draco was currently sitting in the living room of their flat. He smiled when he thought of it as 'theirs'. Hermione was currently in their bedroom arranging her clothing and personal items. He could have transfigured a separate closet for her things, but she hadn't thought to ask and he didn't want to bring it up. He liked looking at their clothing all meshed together. The intimacy he got from her and the sharing of space and their lives made him feel more human and more alive. He didn't feel as removed from people. He was actually looking forward to getting to complain about her things cluttering up the bathroom sink. It meant he wasn't so alone.

Finally, Hermione emerged from the bedroom wearing the black dress she'd worn on their first night in Napoli. Her hair was pulled into a French twist and she had on the shoes he'd bought her in Milan. They were going to meet Potter and the youngest Weasley in Diagon Alley for drinks. He could tell she was nervous by the way she kept checking her hand bag to make sure she hadn't forgotten anything.

"Are you ready?" He asked the question quietly and stuck his hands into his black tailored pants pockets. The blazer he wore emphasized his broad shoulders and he knew he looked good.

"As I'll ever be," she replied. Looking at him for a moment, she hesitated before saying, "Thank you for all you've done. You could've been much nastier about the situation and for that I thank you."

"It isn't as if I'm a bloody saint, Granger. You're the best bloody shag I've ever had in my life and you're damn good company to boot. I'm getting a lot more out of this than you think." She smiled shyly at him and there were a few awkward moments before they flooded to the Leaky Cauldron and the waiting judgmental eyes of society.

They entered the pub and Draco saw the unmistakable beacon of Weasley red hair flanked by two heads of messy black hair and one head of frizzy blonde locks. Hermione moved purposely towards the booth they were in at the back of the room while he trailed a few steps behind. When Ginny saw Hermione she immediately got up to hug her friend.

'Mione! You look terrific! Is this for your new bloke?" All the others at the table shared the sentiment as they all began talking excitedly. Pleasantries were exchanged and Draco noticed

that Lovegood and Longbottom were attached at the hip. He couldn't decide who had drawn the short straw in that relationship. Suddenly, the attention focused back on Hermione who had yet to take a seat.

"So we finally get to meet your new love interest, eh? When is he going to get here?" The she-weasel was practically simmering with excitement and Draco got a perverse thrill at knowing he was going to kill that good mood.

"Well, he's actually here right now." Hermione took a nervous breath and reached for his hand pulling him into their view. "I think we all know each other."

Oh how Draco wished he had a camera. Their faces were shocked, confused, horrified and unsure as if they were waiting on her to grin and shout, 'Gotcha!' Taking that as his cue, he dropped her hand and snaked his arm around her waist and placing a kiss to the side of her neck, coolly stated, "Good evening, all."

"Bloody hell, Hermione," Potter breathed. "Have you gone mental? If this is a prank you've officially outdone Fred and George."

"It isn't a prank," she scowled. Good. If her anger was directed at Potter that meant he could do a little innocent playing around without fear of repercussions.

"You can't be serious, Hermione! He's a death eater!" Neville Longbottom found his voice.

"Actually, Longbottom, my father was, but I never joined. I never committed any crimes."

"That we know of!" The redhead was talking again. 'Hermione, he's called you every offensive name in the book! I think this is definitely the wrong decision. You obviously haven't thought about this.'

"Out of everyone at this table, Ginny, I think I can safely say that I make the most level headed decisions and that I am the most likely to think EVERYTHING through. I'm intelligent enough to make up my own mind. I know it's a bit of a shock and that we have a sketchy past, but this is my decision to make. All I'm asking for is your support."

"Is this because of Ron? Is it to make him jealous?" Harry asked suddenly. "Because trust me, Hermione, he and Lavender are almost through. He already regrets his decision."

"Believe it or not, not everything I do revolves around Ron. Whether you want to admit it or not I am allowed to date people other than him. Yes, I had feelings for him and yes, I was terribly hurt, but I'm not so stupid that I would date someone I dislike just to get back at him! I'm a young woman and if I want to date someone I will.

"How long has this been going on?" Neville was on top of his game tonight, following the conversation and everything.

Draco answered for her so that she wouldn't have to lie. "The night she found out about Won-Won and Lav-Lav she came back to our common room crying and we talked about everything. We slowly got closer after that and then I met up with her in Italy, asked her to go some places with me and now we're an honest to goodness, bonafide couple. This really shouldn't be that difficult for you people to grasp."

"Do you even like her, Malfoy?" Harry sneered. "You're probably just using her to get back in with the Ministry."

"Yes, there is that perk, Potter, but believe it or not my number one motivation for wanting to be with your friend is that not only is she incredibly fit and gorgeous, she's intelligent and kind to boot. Why are you with your girlfriend?" Draco studied his nails. He was very proud of himself. He was being civilized and so far he hadn't lied. This was definitely earning him brownie points for later.

"Why are you with him Hermione?" Ginny's voice was solemn.

"Because of the same reasons he listed and because was there when I needed him. I don't blame the two of you, but after the thing with Ron I couldn't stand being in the Gryffindor common room. It was like I was a fifth wheel. I felt very much unwanted and very unpretty. Being with Draco made me feel the opposite." She caught his eyes as she said this and he knew it was true.

"Bloody hell, Hermione. If you wanted a boyfriend that badly all you would have had to do was wait a few until Dean or Seamus asked you out. Hell, Oliver Wood said he'd always fancied you, you were just always buried in a book. You've cleaned yourself up now and lots of other blokes are interested in you, so why Malfoy? He's a slimy, bratty, selfish, rotten ferret." Harry looked at her resignedly.

"I am still in the room, you know." Draco felt indignant, but from the look on Hermione's face, he wasn't going to have to suffer their presence for much longer. As she spoke her voice got increasingly louder.

"Why Malfoy? Why Malfoy? I'll tell you, Harry. I shouldn't have to sit around and wait until someone else can fit me into his busy dating schedule. I shouldn't have to 'clean myself up' for someone who says he likes me to make a move. Maybe Oliver Wood thought I was too bookish and found that unattractive, but somebody else didn't. Why Malfoy? Because Malfoy was the only one asked, that's why! I didn't have to change anything for him to be interested in me. He was the only one with guts enough to go after me, no matter what his friends might think. I chose Malfoy because I felt pretty and not like a social liability. I won't be dating any of those other boys because I'm not now, nor was I something to be embarrassed of or to hide from other people. If the lot of you think that as well, then you can forget seeing me around. I'm actually good for something other than being a walking dictionary and if you can't see it, too bad. That brings me to my final reason as to why 'Malfoy'. He's a damn good shag. That's right, I have sex and I fucking well enjoy it!"

With that, she turned on her heel and Draco had to run to keep up with her. Hearing her apparate he soon followed, but not before hearing Luna state in a dreamy voice, 'Well, I thought it was an absolutely romantic story!'

Once back in their flat, Draco searched around for his 'girlfriend' before finally finding her in the bathroom, her shoes off and tears streaming down her face as she took off her jewelry. He hated her idiot friends for doing this to her. She had stood by each of them countless times and they wouldn't stand by her because of a childhood grudge. He would kill to have that loyalty from someone and they took it for granted. Feeling awkward he put one arm around her in a half-hug and to his surprise she launched herself into his arms, crying on his shoulder.

As she sobbed on him, he didn't care that she was getting his shirt wet. All that mattered was that she was hurting and she had turned to him for comfort. Picking her up, he took them into the bedroom and laid them down on the bed. She curled against him and sniffing, began to stop crying. He stroked her hair and told her that it would be alright, that they would come around. He didn't believe himself and secretly he hoped they didn't come around, but for now he tried to make her feel better.

As she drifted off to sleep, Draco thought of how he normally responded when girls cried. They were usually crying because he refused to have anything more to do with them, so he often made a quick retreat. Pansy had once cried on his shoulder when Millicent Bulstrode's cat had used her trunk as a litter box, ruining all of her designer clothes. He'd been disgusted by her red, puffy eyes, running make-up and sniffly nose. For the first time in a long time, Draco was worried about how another person felt and it had nothing to do with personal gain. He snuggled down next to her and fell asleep as well.

When they awoke around one am it was storming outside and without a word they undressed and had slow, deliberate sex before going back to sleep. As he closed his eyes for the second time that night, he thought to himself that he wouldn't mind doing this every night for the rest of his life.

Chapter 8: Meet The Grangers

It had been five months since Draco had moved Hermione into his flat and he couldn't recall ever being happier or more content. He felt so alive and genuine around her; like he could tell her anything and she wouldn't judge him. They spent a large amount of their time at home actually talking to each other about things other than what color the drapes should be and who to invite over to dinner. If he'd known that dating outside of the cold circle of wealthy wizards and witches would be this wonderful, he would have started ages ago. Of course, then he wouldn't have his Hermione. Draco had envisioned his life with a mate ensuing much the way the rest of his life had gone. Polite, clipped sentences, chaste hugs and occasional romps in the bedroom immediately followed by a shower and then staying as far away as possible from each other. With Hermione, they argued, debated and philosophized with each other. They went to the opera not just to be seen, but to talk about plot and movement and arrangements. They sometimes would spend a whole morning in bed just talking to each other. He learned her hopes, her fears, her life's goals and more.

One thing that he could never tell her, however, was how important she was to him. When their affair ended, she would have friends and her family to go back to, while he would have no one. He couldn't talk to her about it. He'd been raised by one of the darkest wizarding families in Europe, so he learned early on not to show his weaknesses to anyone. He knew she would never gloat and lord her power over him in a negative way, but she might be disgusted at his weak dependency or worse, pity him. He couldn't deal with that so he never let on about his feelings and he never asked about hers because he just didn't want to know.

He was fairly certain that she was more than fond of him and he knew without a doubt that she enjoyed his company. Some weekends, when they had no social engagements, she chose to just stay at home with him and either read or they would watch muggle movies on the telly she insisted he buy. Her friends had apologized to her and so he sometimes had to deal with them, but other than her parents, he had no rivals for her affections. When Ron had found out about the two of them he had angrily stormed over and demanded to know what she thought she was

doing. Hermione simply asked him if he'd broken it off with Lavender and when he said no, she merely suggested that he leave because he obviously wasn't feeling well. Surely he did think that he had any right to come and make accusations when they were not, nor had they ever been a couple. When Ron had left, Hermione had merely been annoyed, not upset or sad. Draco had been so rough with her that night that he left bite marks all over her body after he practically broke their bed pounding her into it. Fortunately, she was always up for a little bit of rough play and the next day she didn't object when he forbid her to cover the marks on her neck and breasts with concealer or a glamour charm. Oliver Wood, the David Beckham of the quidditch world, was still trying to elbow his way into her life and every so often Draco made sure to leave undisputable evidence that they had just shagged and it had been bloody brilliant.

Stretching lightly, Draco could smell the most wonderful aroma coming from their kitchen. Even though he still used house elves, Hermione insisted that he pay them and she also insisted on cooking their meals. She was a wonderful cook and Draco loved eating something she spent so much time and care on. She was currently making Christmas cookies to take to her parents' house. They would be spending Christmas day with them and Boxing Day with his mother. However, Chris Granger was being let out of his rehab clinic for the weekend, so the Grangers were having a small, early celebration.

He had obliterated the Grangers so that they had no idea about his involvement with their financial problems. Rather, they believed that their original sum had been enough and that Chris had checked himself into rehab. The only members of the Granger family who knew the whole story were Chris and Hermione and then, even Chris didn't know about Hermione's true involvement. As far as he knew his sister's rich, wizard boyfriend had paid off his debts out of love for his sister and the kindness of his heart. Draco wasn't sure he wanted to meet her brother. He couldn't imagine having the love and loyalty of a family like the Grangers growing up and then spurning it for gambling and drugs. He'd almost destroyed his family with his selfishness and hurt Hermione horribly in the process.

Draco was lifted out of his thoughts by a small gingerbread man being lowered in front of his eyes. Reaching out for the cookie he used his other arm to pull Hermione onto his lap and she giggled as he breathed in the scent of her hair. "How is it that even after you've spent the entire morning baking; up to your elbows in sugar, ginger, cinnamon and nutmeg that you still smell like lavender?"

"It's my shampoo. It has actual lavender extract in it. How do you like the cookie?"

"It's wonderful. Did you make any for your parents?" he teased. She giggled again before getting up.

"Are you about ready? I told them we'd be there at one." She moved off of his lap and followed her to their bedroom and watched her brush out her hair. Getting ready always reminded him of Hogwarts and he smirked at her causing her to blush. "What are you looking so satisfied for?"

"Did you ever think, back when you punched me in third year, that you'd be sitting in our shared bedroom, brushing your hair and getting ready to take Christmas cookies to your parents?"

"No, but I did think that I might tie you up and smack you around for a bit, but under an entirely different connotation." She gave him a wicked look and he knew that the visit at her parents' house wouldn't end fast enough.

As they stood outside, Draco put his hand on the small of Hermione's back. Although he knew

that what they had was strictly business, it was still important to him that her family like him. What if they saw him for what he truly was; an underhanded, unscrupulous louse who cheated, tricked and wormed his way into their daughter's knickers, defiling their pristine princess? He could deal with his own family's rejection, since he nor anyone else for that matter had ever had their acceptance, but he couldn't deal with this family's rejection. He knew that constantly touching their daughter was not the way to win brownie points, but he couldn't help it. When he got nervous, touching her calmed him down. It reassured him of her presence and the warmth from her skin was soothing.

Suddenly the door opened and a tiny grey-haired lady snatched Hermione away from him, knocking a batch of her cookies out of her hands. He watched as the little woman picked Hermione up in a bear hug that made Hagrid look limp wrested.

"Oh, 'Mione flower! It's so good to you, my lovely! Look at how beautiful you've gotten! More like your mother everyday, you are!"

"It's good to see you too, Gram," Hermione said when she could breathe again. "I want you to meet somebody. Gram, this is my boyfriend, Draco Malfoy."

Draco found himself almost knocked off his feet when the woman attacked him, eventually lifting him up off the ground. "Of course he is! It's so nice to meet you! You're such a lovely couple! Isn't my Mione flower beautiful?" Draco was overwhelmed by the tiny woman's passionate outbursts.

"She's absolutely gorgeous, Mrs...?"

"Mrs. Granger, dear, but just call me Gram. We're practically family. Here, let me take those." She took the white boxes that held the cookies and ushered them into the living room. Draco saw Mr. Granger and an old man with white curly hair that he assumed must be Hermione's grandfather and Mr. Granger watching football on the TV. It was Manchester vs. Liverpool and Draco didn't know much about the sport, but from what he did know, he was betting that Manchester would win. As he stepped into the living room, he was greeted warmly and passed a beer as he sat down to pretend to watch the game.

Hermione was whisked into the kitchen and eventually Jane Granger emerged letting out a sigh of relief. "Thank goodness the two of you got here! Marcus, your mother is still unconvinced that I don't need to know how to bake potatoes au gratin from scratch in order to survive."

"Yes, well, Hermione's here now so at least we know that the goose won't get burned." Marcus Granger's eyes never left the television screen as he spoke absentmindedly to his wife. As the two argued about Jane's cooking skills, or lack there of, a very handsome man descended the stairs and walked into the living room.

"Do I hear a squirrel in the kitchen? Mum, you really should be more careful about leaving the window open." At the sound of her brother's voice and the use of his old pet name for her the kitchen door flew open and Hermione launched herself into the handsome man's arms, causing Draco's jaw to twitch.

"Chris! Oh, you look wonderful!" Hermione hadn't seen her brother in almost a year and the last time she had seen him he had been far too thin and had the unhealthy, stretched look that most users got. Now however, he had his movie star handsome good looks back and Draco could tell

from his personality how people had a hard time denying him anything. He had a wicked sense of humor, a quick smile and such a sincere voice. It was the kind of voice that should be a newscaster's voice because it was hypnotic in its ability to weave a trusting spell over the listener. As Draco listened to Chris Granger interact with his family, he realized that Hermione wasn't the only magical person in her family. Chris Granger's power, while dull and not nearly powerful enough to get him into Hogwarts, it was still there and Draco didn't think that even Chris himself was aware of it. Chris Granger had the ability to persuade people with his voice. The reason Hermione was immune to it was because she was much stronger magically. Chris Granger probably never went home from a pub alone and never got into serious trouble before this point because of that hypnotic power.

Another very handsome young man was visiting as well. It was Chris' best mate since the age of four, Alex Downing. Draco detested Alex Downing from the start because of the easy way in which he touched Hermione. Yes, this boy had known her since she was born, but he had no right to keep his hand on her waist for that long. Even more troublesome was the fact that he was a lawyer and had helped Chris with his court cases, a fact which Marcus and Jane Granger remembered with clarity, while Draco's good deed went forgotten. This boy, unlike Chris, did not mean well. No, he wasn't a complete louse, but Draco could smell his own. Given the proper circumstances, this boy would have blackmailed his best friend's little sister into sleeping with him in a heartbeat. Draco told himself he was different because he actually cared for her, while this Alex person would see her as a conquest, an accessory.

Draco went into the kitchen to visit with Hermione while the other men stayed in the living room. Draco once again had the need to touch her. Bending to what he thought was sneaking a kiss, he heard a pleasant chuckle from her grandmother. "I'm sorry, it's just that my Paul and I were the same way when we first got together. Do you live close to Hermione, Draco?"

"Actually, Gram, Draco and I live together in our own flat." Why did she have to announce that! This terrifying old woman had liked him before and now she would physically lift him over her shoulder and throw him out the door.

The elderly lady gave Hermione a bland, displeased look. "And when are you getting married?" she asked in a deceptively calm voice.

"I think it's a bit early for that, Gram," Hermione blushed and looked at the floor and her grandmother turned her accusatory gaze onto Draco. "If it's far enough into the relationship to move in together, it's far enough into it to start buying a ring! Do you understand me?" Draco mutely nodded before sitting down at the kitchen table. Hermione was red faced and asked him if he might like to go talk with her brother a moment. He gladly left the kitchen.

Draco was introduced to Chris and Alex and as the family ate the dinner that Hermione and her grandmother had prepared, he noticed that Chris kept nervously looking at him. It wasn't until later when Draco had stepped onto the front steps to get some air that Chris approached him.

"Hey."

"Hello," Draco responded. There were a few awkward moments before he went on. "You don't have to say anything. I know that you're grateful and I know that you didn't mean for this shit to happen. However, if it happens again, I won't bail you out no matter what your sister says. You hurt her and your parents terribly and forced me to perform a spell on them that is practically illegal in our world. I hope for your sake that you're sticking with this rehab thing because you

really need to grow up."

"I know I do. Believe me, this was one of the most humbling experiences of my life, but it was also a turning point. I've always been good at getting what I want, I've just always wanted the wrong things. I know that you care deeply for my sister and that that's why you did what you did. Thank you and thank you for taking such good care of her. She's truly happy with you and you've done so much for her. Thank you." If Chris knew what Draco had done to his sister, he doubted very seriously that he would be thanking him. Then again, his best friend wanted to do the same things to her, so maybe Chris was used to people wanting to shag his sister.

Chris stepped back into the house and Alex stepped out. Draco felt instant dislike running through him as the older boy gave him his own smirk as he appraised him.

"So, you get to shag little Hermione senseless every night in your shared flat. Well done, you. So how did you do it? Were you her first and so she fancies herself in love with you or is it because of your bad boy persona that a good girl like her just can't resist?" Draco must have looked at him quizzically because he echoed Draco's thoughts from earlier. "We can smell our own. You've been around the block more than just a few times and so you thought you'd try to have it off with the studious, bookworm girl, except that she ended up being everything you ever wanted and more. You don't honestly think you're the first person that this has happened to, do you? Well, enjoy it while it lasts mate, because eventually, she'll get bored of you or figure out that you aren't nearly as much of a tortured soul as she thought and she'll drop you for some shining hero, good guy. I've been there, I know. Let's face it, unless you get her up the duff, she's going to leave. The only way that a girl like that would ever stay with a boy like you is if she had some very big, moral reason and from the look of you, I doubt there's much to stay for if she ever did find a quality bloke."

"I think I can keep her satisfied quite well on my own, thanks. I don't know what you're insinuating, but you're wrong." Draco was furious at the way this man could see right through him and pick out all his worst fears. He was even more angry at the flippant way in which he spoke of his relationship.

"Keep telling yourself that, ducky. Maybe it'll make it easier when you watch her walk off with golden boy. Maybe she'll even walk off with the boy next door, her brother's best friend that gets along great with her family. That would be a nice romantic story to tell the kids, now wouldn't it?" With his last statement, Alex walked back into the house.

Draco waited until he could compose himself before going back inside. Alex's words taunted him and even worse, here was someone older, more experienced at playing this game than he was. He was certain that all it would take was a few strategically placed sentences for Hermione to leave him and go for Alex. However, something Alex said, stuck out to him. If he got her up the duff, she wouldn't leave him. Alex had said it to put him off, but it made Draco start to think. What if he did get her pregnant? He'd already taken his chances with no contraceptive spell, but what if she actually did become pregnant? Her grandmother was already pushing for them to get married and Hermione was moral to the core. She would stay with her baby's father and if her family pushed her towards marriage, she would comply. The only question, was how to do it?

A/N- Okay, I'm going to let you guys vote. Should Draco continue to let fate bring him what he wants or should he actively try to get Hermione pregnant? I'm leaning towards the latter, but I'll

let you guys decide. Thank you again for all the lovely reviews! You are all wonderful, awesome kind people!

Chapter 9: Where Are We Going?

Hermione was reclined on the sofa in her flat going over a report about the Celestina prophecies. She had accepted the job in the department of mysteries and it was a perfect fit. It combined all of her interests into one and was challenging enough that she didn't get bored, but not so overwhelming that she constantly had to bring her work home. The prophecies made surrounding Celestina Warbeck however were far too hilarious not to bring home for light reading and it appeared that every seer from 1974 to 1981 had made some sort of weird prophesy about the simpering singer. Suddenly, the flames in the fireplace roared to life and her 'boyfriend' stepped out, spelling himself clean.

"I've had the most unbelievably horrid day!" Hermione smiled slightly at the sulky expression on his handsome features. "Do you know that Percy Weasley actually expected me to work on Boxing Day and had the gall to dress me down for saying I wouldn't even though my position is higher than his?"

"That's not surprising," she smiled as she got up to take his cloak, "he's always been an uppity thing who took the slightest bit of authority too far. You should have been in Gryffindor when he was a prefect."

"That makes me even happier that I was sorted into Slytherin. He's a complete nutter! I sat there and listened to him rant for twenty minutes on how I shouldn't let the Minister down. I could've been home half an hour ago if it hadn't been for him!" Hermione rubbed his back in soothing circles as he sat down between her spread legs on the lounge and leaned back into her. As he rested his head on the crook of her neck, she kissed the side of his head and ran her fingers through his hair. It was moments like these that made Hermione incredibly happy about the situation fate had dealt her.

Chris was almost out of rehab, her parents still had their home and were none the wiser and all it took was for Hermione to have mind-blowing sex with a bloke that she was coming to like more everyday. She'd always admitted that Draco was sexy, but she had hated him for the better part of her academic career, so she'd never given a second thought to what it might have been like to be with him. Even at the beginning of their affair when she'd been reluctant at best to participate, the sex had been amazing and her inquisitive nature had taken over and viewed the arrangement as an experiment in sexuality. It was after her experiment in Italy with sex magic that she'd begun to feel something emotional for him.

At first she counted it as a fluke. Anyone was likely to feel something akin to love for their first sexual partner, but then he had saved not only her brother, but her family from financial ruin as well. Of course that would make a person grateful, so she just chalked it up to the gratitude and sense of relief she felt. However, lately she couldn't shake the feeling that her attachment was for reasons other than the obligation she felt towards him and that couldn't be good. Draco Malfoy was not the kind of person she needed to fall in love with or to have any kind of feelings for other than a passing fondness.

She couldn't forget how he had been with her the night that Harry, Ginny and Neville had made her so upset. She also couldn't forget how it had been instinct that made her fly into his arms that night. She hadn't even given it a second thought, turning to him for comfort. All this acting

was making her start to forget that she wasn't his girlfriend, she was his mistress. That was another thing that bothered her. She had no idea how far into the debt she had worked herself because he never made mention of it. Sometimes she tried to pay him her share of the utilities and other expenses, but he just waved it off, telling her that it didn't matter or that it was just a drop in a bucket. She didn't like mentioning it because it reminded her of her own bendable morals.

When she'd first agreed to Draco's demands it had been self-preservation, but it had also been a way to keep her parents from experiencing any more pain. Chris had been disappointing enough that ever since the age of four, she had felt the need to always be the good girl, to never do anything out of line or immoral. She knew that she couldn't be perfect, but Chris made so many wrong decisions that she felt she had to make all the right ones in order to make her parents feel that they had succeeded in raising her. When she met up with Harry and Ron, she had easily slipped into the role of moral authority and voice of reason. It wasn't until Draco that she had ever thought of being anything other than careful, restrained and sensible. She'd known that she had a wild, feral side to her. It just took large amounts of alcohol and Draco Malfoy to pull it out of her. She'd always been passionate about any course she undertook, but sex with Draco went beyond that. It felt right, natural and for the first time ever, she didn't want to be in control. That was why it had to stop.

She couldn't muse about it further, however because Draco was dragging her towards their bedroom. For some reason, he found the velour yoga pants and white tank top she wore around the flat irresistible. He carried her through the house, pausing at various intervals to pull her top down to reveal her breasts and suckle at them like a baby. The sensation of him sucking on her nipples tugged at a line that went straight to her core, flooding her knickers. No matter how many times she had the boy, it was never dull or repetitive.

He laid her on the bed and pulled her pants off with one yank, leaving her in her white lace knickers and tank top. Crawling up her body he ripped the delicate lace and buried his face in her center. Watching his blonde head as he licked and sucked greedily at her center was an unbelievable turn on.

Catching her eyes he sucked at her clitoris like it was his favorite candy. Breaking away for a moment, he spoke, "Look at me. I want you to watch me while I do this."

They held eye contact while he lapped at her center, devouring her juices as quickly as they were produced. Using the pad of his tongue, he lavished attention on her labia, pulling it into his mouth and licking her like an ice cream. Using his lips, he feasted on her core, propping her hips up so that he had better access. The more he sucked and licked, the more frustrated Hermione became. Finally, her stomach clenched and she flooded his chin with her release. He removed his cock from his trousers and without warning, he plunged into her. He gave a few quick thrusts before turning her so that her back was towards him and he lay down on the bed, pulling her on top of him. All at once, she noticed the mirror on the ceiling showing off their naked bodies. She was laying on top of him, her back to his front, her legs splayed on either side of his hips. He positioned his cock at her entrance and Hermione was able to watch as the ten inch piece of his anatomy disappeared inside of her.

Draco held her gaze in the mirror as she watched him fuck her out of the corner of her eye. It didn't seem possible that something so large could fit inside her, but it did and oh, did it feel wonderful. She could feel her second orgasm building and when the walls of her sex began to flutter, he picked her up again and flipped them so that he was on top, her arms pinned above

her head, his eyes, bearing intently into her own.

"Tell me you love me," he said. "I don't care if you don't mean it, just please say it!" She hesitated and he bit her breast, causing her to cry out in pain. "Say it!" he yelled.

"I love you," she said, confused. He pumped into her much faster and she came, screaming his name from her lips. He spilled his seed inside her, gripping her hips and tilting them in an upward angle, but never withdrawing from her. She was glad. She loved the warm feeling of his sperm hitting her womb.

As she came down from her high, Hermione suddenly realized that he hadn't used the contraceptive spell on her. "Wait, you need to use the spell," she said hazily.

"I used it last night," he panted, "and besides, those things are good for twenty-four hours." Hermione knew he was right, but she was still unconvinced. What would happen if she did get pregnant? How would he feel? For that matter, how would she feel?

Christmas at her parents' house came and went. Draco handled all of her young cousins surprisingly well and he seemed happy enough to just sit and watch her read to them or play the silly little kid board games with them. He didn't even mind that they sat at the 'kids' table when dinner was served so that they could help the younger ones eat. Her grandmother still liked Draco and kept dropping not-so-subtle hints that he needed to marry her granddaughter or suffer the consequences. The only people in her family that knew they were magical were her parents and brother, so her grandmother had no idea that she was threatening probably the most powerful wizard in the whole of the United Kingdom.

They returned home that evening and the next morning they started off for Malfoy Manor and Narcissa Malfoy. Before leaving, they exchanged their own gifts; however, in front of the Christmas tree that Hermione had insisted they put up in the living room. Hermione had thought and thought of what to give him before finally deciding on a very special silver watch.

"You got me a watch? It's very nice. Thank you." He looked slightly confused.

"Yes, it's a watch, but it's more than that. Here, put it on. Now, I want you to say my name." He did as she instructed and immediately, her face came into view and right underneath it, smoky letters spelled out, "Living Room, Home". He looked up at her in shock. "You always want to know where I am, so I had the watch made and put the spell on it. I got the idea from the Weasleys' clock. It really-" Whatever the watch really was, she never got out because he pounced on her, pinning her to the floor, bruising her lips with a kiss. "I take it that you like it, then."

"I love it," he growled. He kissed her once more before letting her up. "I got you something as well," he said and handed her a box.

"Oh, Draco! It's lovely!" Hermione was floored. Inside was the largest amber pendant she'd ever seen. It had a goblin wrought gold chain around it and the backing was done in scroll work. At the center of the widest part of the tear drop shaped piece of amber was a gold flower and a tiny, perfect diamond in the center. He took it from her hands and put it on her. When he came back to look at her front side, she was reminded of what he'd demanded she say in bed.

"Do you like it?" she nodded. "I got it because it reminded me of your eyes." They didn't speak

anymore after that. He just held her for a moment and then they got up and collected what they would need for the journey to his mother's house.

Once they were there, Narcissa Malfoy very coolly greeted the two of them and Hermione saw Draco revert back to cool, distant aristocrat he was at Hogwarts. Narcissa invited them to come to the sitting room for cocktails before dinner. The three of them might as well have been strangers. Narcissa hadn't seen her son in almost a year and yet she hadn't even hugged him or said that she missed him. She only said that it was good to see him and lovely to meet Hermione. She spoke of the weather in France and asked how Draco's stocks were doing, to which he replied with curt, perfunctory sentences. She inquired as to Hermione's parents' health and when dinner came, she asked if Hermione was enjoying her job at the ministry.

"Yes, I am, very much. Thank you for asking, Mrs. Malfoy."

"Will you continue to work once you are married?" Narcissa coolly asked.

"I intend to, yes." Hermione suddenly had a feeling that she was being tested and so she held the older woman's intense gaze. If she had thought Narcissa a brainless trophy wife before, she was sorely mistaken. Narcissa was cold and superficial, but not brainless.

"Even if your husband has enough money that you don't need to work? I'm sure there are lots of notable charities that could use organizing."

"With all due respect to you and your lifestyle, Mrs. Malfoy, I would not feel the least bit happy being unproductive or doing things that a third year at Hogwarts could manage, no matter how positive the yielded results may be. Even if I suddenly found a cure for stupidity and was rich for the rest of my days off of those rewards, I would continue to work because no matter how much money I had, I would not feel happy unless I doing something with a tangible benefit. I do however realize that there are others who do not share my feelings. I do not think any less of them, I only realize that there are many different things that make different people happy." Hermione took a sip of her wine and looked over at Draco. The three of them were seated ridiculously far apart on the table and looked like he might explode.

Finally, Narcissa spoke. "I see you indeed quite a rare witch, Miss Granger. I've heard of your talents and the entire wizarding world knows of you good deeds, but now I can see you are a young lady of great character. I have so much enjoyed having you in my home." Just like that, Hermione dismissed and the discussion was closed. As she sat there calming down from the older woman's implications, she thought that it must take a great talent to both compliment a person and put them in their place at the same time.

Once dinner was finished, the three retired to the sitting room and exchanged gifts. Narcissa was much more chatty with Hermione since the blow-up and Hermione even thought she saw the older woman smile once. Once she had established that Hermione wasn't a gold-digger, she opened up slightly more. Her interactions with her son were still very strained, however.

Suddenly, a house elf appeared with a 'pop' and bowed very low to Narcissa and Draco. "Mistress, a Mr. Theodore Nott is at the door with his family, shall I bring them in?"

"Yes, Ilya, show them in." Narcissa took another sip of tea and then stood up. "Forgive me, but I feel the most dreadful headache coming on. I think I'll retire for awhile." Hermione knew where the headache was coming from and wished she could do the same. Before she say anything

however, Draco pulled her up and they walked into the foyer to see Pansy Nott removing her cloak and tossing it on two hapless elves while her husband struggled in the doorway with a baby carrier and a diaper bag. Apparently the two of them hadn't wasted anytime in ensuring that the Nott family had an heir.

"Pansy," Draco said flatly, "how good to see you." His tone suggested anything but. Hermione couldn't help but feel jealous. She knew that Draco and Pansy had been lovers and that Pansy had wanted to marry Draco. She didn't know why, but even seeing the girl with her husband and new baby made Hermione territorial. Taking the baby from Theodore's arms, she led him into the sitting room.

"Draco, darling, how have you been? You've been dreadfully naughty! I haven't heard a peep out of you since little Tulip was born." Hermione was glad to see Draco grimace at her presence.

"Well, Pans, I figured that you and Theo might want some time to spend with your new daughter." While Pansy kept her attention riveted to Draco, Hermione held the baby who had become quite fussy. Rummaging in the diaper bag, Hermione pulled out a bottle of formula and began feeding the baby, rocking her back and forth.

"Oh, we just adore her, don't we dear?" Pansy didn't wait on a response from Theo. "However, I don't recommend that you have a baby anytime soon. I'm unable to do any of the things I used to do. They just create such huge demands upon your time!"

"She doesn't seem to be too demanding to me," Hermione dryly stated. Pansy just sniffed and didn't seem to be bothered at all that Hermione had calmed and was now feeding her baby. Hermione noticed that both Draco and Theodore were watching her with a strange look in their eyes.

"Yes, well, you spent all those years babying Potter and Weasley, so I imagine you might have a head start in mothering department." Pansy meant it as an insult, but it didn't quite sting. Hermione was in fact a natural when it came to babies. She hoped to have at least two or so of her own one day. She saw no reason to hide the skill or be ashamed of it. Maybe things were different in the pureblood community. As she absentmindedly winded the baby, she caught Draco's gaze and saw something that was a mix between hunger and longing in his eyes.

As the two couples spoke, Hermione noted the differences between them. She and Draco sat on the lounge, side by side, his arm around her shoulders as she continued to hold baby Tulip. Theo and Pansy sat as far apart from one another as possible, neither of them even looking at each other. Whenever one spoke of the other, it was always in third person and as if the other person wasn't in the room. Pansy shamelessly flirted with Draco and Theo got a little too close for Hermione's comfort. Fortunately, Draco was not oblivious, so he kept his hand firmly around Hermione's waist.

Eventually, the visit ended and Hermione handed little Tulip back to her father. As soon as they left, Draco let out a sigh and turned to look at her.

"How do you feel about babies?" he asked. Hermione was taken back by the question.

"I think they're wonderful. I think Pansy is a fool for not taking more interest in hers."

"So you aren't opposed to them?" Why was he asking this? Did he think that after all this time she would start to trap him?

"I'm not opposed to them at all! Why are you asking this?"

"No reason. It's just that out of all the women in this house you are the only who has never had a baby and yet you seem to be the most adept at caring for them. In fact, you seem to be the most adept at caring about people in general."

"It's just how I'm programmed. You've met my family. How could I be raised in that and not come out like this?"

"Your brother was raised in that atmosphere and he certainly turned out very differently."

"Yes, but Chris is still very warm and caring, despite his flaws. I think what this all boils down to is the fact that your society is cutthroat and so wrapped up in appearances that you're all terrified to show that you care for someone, because if you do then everyone else will know that you have a weakness and they will exploit said weakness to gain their own ends. That's why you wanted me, isn't it? You knew that if you ever dated anyone else and they saw you as vulnerable that they would use that against you to get what they wanted; be it money or power. You can't comprehend the fact someone would actually like you just for the sake of liking you."

"You live with me; you went to school with me. You know that no one would actually want to be around me for any reason other than the ones you stated. My good qualities are that I'm a capable leader, I'm dedicated to my work and I've a shrewd intellect. That's how I made head boy. Unfortunately, that also means that the only people that are going to want to spend time with me are Slytherins and we all know how loyal they are. I don't have the qualities that inspire that Gryffindor kind of friendship of love and loyalty and overlooking flaws."

"You inspired at least one Gryffindor to like you. You are cunning and you are often underhanded, but you do have very good qualities and are quite companionable to live with. I can't say that I would have bothered to find out if it hadn't been for the pictures, but I'm also far from unhappy in my current situation. I'm glad I got to know you. I like you, Draco."

Something that looked like pain flashed in his eyes and she was sorry for whatever it was that had hurt him. "Let's talk about something else."

And they did. Hermione was not heralded as the brightest witch of her age for nothing. She knew that she had struck a chord and gotten too close to some of his deepest fears. Narcissa eventually got over her headache and the two of them decided to stay the night in the Manor. As she lay awake in the mausoleum like room that was Draco's childhood bedroom, she listened to the steady breathing of the body next to hers. She imagined that he'd spent a lot of time alone in the large, cold house. She knew that his father had been cruel and wicked and that extended into abuse towards Draco. She couldn't imagine a life in which she had to earn her parent's love, much less their affection. Draco hadn't been of any interest to Lucius unless he could use him as a means to further his Death Eater goals. Narcissa, while neither a fanatic nor a bigot had still been reserved and measured in any praise and it was clear that she was uncomfortable around her own son. How would she feel if her own mother didn't even want to spend time with her and acted as if it was a chore to do so?

As she lay looking at his pale blonde hair in the moonlight, she wondered how anyone could

have ever wanted to hurt him as a child. She knew she was entering dangerous territory, thinking of him so tenderly, but she didn't care. One day, she wouldn't be falling asleep next to him and when that day came, who would be hurt if she had genuinely cared for him and wanted to be around him for reasons other than a debt and the secrecy of a few pictures? Maybe both their lives would be better off because of it.

A/N- Okay, so nothing has happened yet, but I felt it was important to establish Hermione's feelings before I got to the actual pregnancy. I don't think that Hermione would be falling for Draco as quickly, because Hermione is not new to intimacy or affection. She has had that for her entire life. Draco on the other hand has never experienced love, so he has no clue how to recognize when it is shown to him and he doesn't know how to show it to someone else. Thank you to everyone who reads and reviews! You guys are completely wonderful and honestly, what keeps this story going. I feel like I'm getting better at writing because of your wonderful suggestions and the details you give me. Thank you for such a wonderful experience!

Chapter 10: A plan Put Into Motion

The day was warm and sunny and Draco couldn't believe that he was going to be celebrating his 'anniversary' tonight. It had been one year since he had paid off her family's debts and he was absolutely panicked. He kept her in the dark about how much she owed him because the truth was; he hadn't been keeping track of it himself. He didn't want to put a monetary value on the sex they had because he didn't want to cheapen it any further. However, what if she actually looked up the escort services and figured out how much he would pay for each service and declare herself financially free of him and waltz out his door and his life. He couldn't let that happen.

Of course, there was always the option of asking her to stay, but Draco scoffed at that idea. Alex Downing was correct that she would want some golden good guy who didn't cross the line of decency. Also, why would she magically fall in love with a man who had blackmailed her into sleeping with him? No, he needed a reason for her to stay and it needed to be a reason that gave him power over the situation.

He'd been subtly trying to get her to forget about contraceptive charms when they had sex and tried his hardest to push the time limits on the ones they did cast. Those things weren't always fool proof, but Hermione was such an adept witch that hers always held true. Watching her with Pansy's baby and her little cousins made him very anxious to have her pregnant. After all, she loved children, so it wasn't like he was doing anything she wouldn't want, right? Tonight after dinner he wanted to take her out and get her absolutely pissed. So pissed that she wouldn't notice his plan.

Draco apparated them to just outside Mykonos, the Greek Restaurant he had selected for the evening. Hermione looked absolutely beautiful and was wearing the green silk dress they'd bought in Milan along with the amber necklace he'd gotten her for Christmas. Everything she was wearing he had paid for and he felt incredibly smug when he noticed all the men in the restaurant turn their eyes towards her as she walked in. His mother had been famously beautiful, but hers was a cold beauty. Hermione's beauty not only drew attention, but her warm nature made her approachable and thus infinitely more attractive. Once they were married, he was going to make certain that he put the largest, most noticeable and ostentatious ring on her hand so that no one would be able to miss the fact that she was taken. He held her seat for her

as they sat down to dinner.

"This is absolutely lovely, Draco," Hermione commented. She watched the musicians in the corner play music as she ate her dinner and drank her wine. Draco made sure to order at least two bottles since she liked the stuff so much.

"To us," he said as he raised his own glass. "Here's to us, wonderful shags and a happy family." He smiled as she laughed and raised her own glass to clink against his. They stayed talking until the sun set and Draco watched her face in evening glow, relaxed in the slight buzz of the wine. He didn't want her to get sleepy so he suggested that they go to the night club. She got up and walked out with him, slightly more openly affectionate than when they had walked in together.

The club he took her to wasn't a dark, smoky, music pounding kind of club. Instead it had a Latin theme with salsa dancing. It was bright and cheery and it wouldn't put her on the defensive. Everyone was happy and smiling. Getting her a drink, he pulled her close to him and gently rocked her to the beat. She sipped on the alcohol and leaned back into him. Salsa dancing, besides being bright and cheerful was also extremely provocative and sensual. He was aware that people were watching them because not only were they a very attractive couple, they were both very adept at the dance they were doing. Watching the two of them glide around the dance floor was almost like watching sex.

After her third drink, Draco could tell that Hermione was starting to get drunk. Little glimpses of the girl he'd found that fateful night back in their common room were beginning to show. She let him touch higher on her thigh than normal and didn't care that he pushed her dress up to do so. He let his hands glide over her silk-encased breasts and found that her nipples were hard and straining against his finger tips. He was already hard from the dancing and the thought of what was to come made his pants uncomfortably tight. Thinking it was time, he pulled her close and felt her hips automatically jerk forward to meet his. He would put money on it that her knickers were soaked through.

"Why don't we sit down, love? Let's let them stare at someone else." Glassy-eyed, she smiled at him and it was so trusting that it almost made him rethink his plan. Almost.

"I could use a breather," she said. "I could also use another one of these coconut drinks. Why don't you go get me one while I use the ladies' room?" She smiled at him and his heart pounded. It was happening. He walked towards the bar and calmly ordered his their drinks before returning to their table in the back corner. Making sure that nobody was looking, he pulled a tiny vial of green liquid out of his shirt pocket and emptied it into her drink. Then he pulled out a tiny vial of blue liquid and poured it into his. He hoped that he could get her home before his potion took over, because if he didn't he might shag her in the middle of the dance floor. It was virility potion that guaranteed him a full erection and multiple orgasms with little to no wait time in between. It also caused incredible randiness. He decided to wait until she had finished her drink to start on his own.

He'd planned this evening out to a tee. When she hadn't gotten pregnant on 'accident', Draco had looked at other ways to help move things along. He started requesting that she cook with mainly vegetables and fish with only fruit for desert. He started bringing her water to drink and he started to follow her monthly cycle. He knew that he only had about a twenty-four window to get to her while she was fertile and fortunately that twenty four hour window fell on their 'anniversary' so that taking her out and plying her with alcohol didn't seem too suspicious. He'd

done careful research and was positive that his careful planning would work. He had to get her drunk so that she wouldn't remember to ask for the contraceptive spell and so that she wouldn't notice the fertility potion he'd slipped into her drink. He'd been putting tiny drops of the green liquid into her tea every morning to get her used to the affects so that when he put the double dosage into her drink tonight, she wouldn't feel the usual warming sensation that most drinkers got after they took it. He only hoped that he didn't end up making her have quadruplets. He wanted more than one child, but he didn't want a litter. Although the thought of four Malfoys in the same year running around Hogwarts made him grin.

"What are you looking so pleased for?" Hermione had come back into the room and picked up her drink and started sipping on it. Draco watched her intently and she noticed. "What?"

"How many of those have you had tonight?"

"I've only had four, thank you," she turned her bossy little nose up in the air in indignation. "If I'd known you were going to be this fussy, I wouldn't have started drinking at all. It isn't like I'm a lush that normally embarrasses you on every evening out."

"No, I'm actually looking very much forward to you getting drunk. Every time you do, it always yields positive results for me. I just can't wait to get you home and shag you while you've got nothing on but those shoes." He took a sip of his drink.

"Is this before or after you've shagged me while I'm wearing nothing but your necklace?" She downed the rest of her drink and Draco slammed his back.

"Let's go," he said, his voice rough, but they never even made it out the door. On the way towards the exit, Draco pulled Hermione into one of the toilet stalls and pulling her legs around his waist, proceeded to bang her against the stall door with the intensity of his thrusts. The loud music outside drowned out her moans and his answering expletives as they both reached their climax. Not caring that his pants were around his ankles, he apparated them both back to their flat and deposited her on the bed. Kicking his pants and shoes off he removed his shirt and went for the drawer that held his camera.

Picking it up he turned to see her, kneeling in the middle of their bed, one shoulder strap of her dress fallen over to expose the top of her breast. Her hair was wild from just being fucked and her lips were swollen. Looking at her, he positioned himself and the view finder of the camera so that he had the best light possible and took her picture. It had been a long time since he'd taken one with her eyes looking at him. Crawling up to meet her on the bed, he continued to alternate between taking her picture and licking and nibbling his way down her body.

"Look up at me," he commanded. He could feel the potion he drank working and pulled her dress up and over head before grapping her hips and impaling her on him. Grabbing her so that they were face to face, her bum balanced on his knelt thighs, he held the camera out in front of them and took a picture the two of them moving against one another and a picture of the two of them kissing. Deciding he had more important things to do, he tossed the camera aside and got down to the business of impregnating her.

"Tell me you love me," he asked again. "You don't have to mean it, I just want to hear you say it."

"Why do you want to hear it if you think I don't mean it?" she asked as he raked his nails gently

down her rib cage.

"Because no one else has ever said it," he told her softly. That was as close as he would come to admitting his feelings for her. He wanted to add, 'Because if I can't hear from you everynight before bed, I at least want to hear it while I'm inside of you. Because you'll be having my baby soon and I want this child to be a product of at least passion, if not love and not a duty to be fulfilled'.

She looked at him for a moment and it was like she could see right through every part of him and for one moment he thought she might laugh, but instead smiled at him, kissed his nose and said, "I love you, Draco."

They spent the rest of the night making love and by the time Hermione passed out from alcohol and exhaustion, Draco was positive that he'd done everything right. Tilting her hips to an upward angle, he watched her sleep. After waiting the five minutes his research told him to, he gently massaged her belly and kissed it reverently. Pulling her close to him, he wrapped his arms around her and rested his chin on the crook between her neck and shoulder. The stubble on his chin would leave a rash in the morning and smiling he thought of how she would complain about it. Drifting off to sleep, Draco hoped he had made the right decision.

Chapter 11: Pregnancy Surprise

Draco waited until he heard the violent heaving stop before pushing open the door to the loo. Hermione was crouched next to the toilet, her head resting on her arm. He knew she didn't like him to be in the room while she was sick. He could appreciate that; he didn't like anyone to see him at his weak point either. However, he also desperately wanted to hold her. It had been four weeks since their anniversary date and for the past three mornings he'd woken up to the sounds of her vomiting. The one time he tried to bring her breakfast in bed after a vomiting spell, she had leapt out of the bed at the smell of the eggs and brought more of the contents of her stomach up.

"Are you sure you shouldn't see a healer?" he asked, helping her up. He pulled her hair back from pale face and walked her to the sink to rinse her mouth out. Once she was done brushing her teeth, he picked her up and put her back in the bed. "Actually, I'm going to go ahead and call one. You don't need to go into work today."

"You're right," she said sleepily. "There's no reason for me to go in and get everyone else sick as well. Maybe I need a day to rest. I'll feel better tomorrow."

"I'll owl the doctor and have one of the elves make you a cup of weak tea. Don't move, I'll be right back." He kissed her forehead and walked to the front hallway to where they kept their owl. If he had known that this would be that difficult on her, he might have rethought it. What if something happened and he lost her? What if she wasn't pregnant and was really sick? He couldn't stand the thought of her being ill.

Attaching a note onto the leg of the eagle owl, he sighed before summing Zed, their house elf. After making sure that the elf understood how sick his mistress was, he walked back through their home to see Hermione's pale face lost in thought.

"What are you thinking?" he asked, sitting down next to her.

"Nothing," she said. He gave her a look and she smiled and continued. "It's just that I really appreciate you staying with me while I'm sick. I know I'm a burden right now and you've been very sweet."

"What else am I supposed to do? I know we don't have the most conventional of relationships, but I wouldn't have asked for this if I didn't like spending time with you." Taking a deep breath, he looked at his feet while he said his next sentences. "I do care for you, you know. It isn't just about sex, although that part of it is amazing."

Instead of being shocked at his revelation, Hermione merely smiled at him and said, "I know."

As she drifted off to sleep, Draco thought to himself about how she didn't seem bothered by his admission and how she seemed to just accept what they had. Maybe he should have tried to win her the old-fashioned way, but he still didn't think it would have worked. She said so herself that she probably never would have stayed another night if it hadn't been for the pictures. However, he didn't think that he would have fallen for her if he hadn't spent all that time with her their seventh year. He remembered what his life was like before her. It was lonely and fake. No one before her had ever taken the time to truly get to know him in a capacity other than what would motivate in a political alliance or in an attempt to get in his bed. He knew he was good in bed, but the witches he'd slept with previously were only after what he could give them, whether it was an orgasm, status or money. None of them wanted to actually spend time with him. With her, he felt accepted and alive. Hell, he could fart in front of her and she just giggled and went on as if nothing had happened. He didn't want to go back to the stiff coldness of his previous life. It would seem even emptier now that he knew what companionship and intimacy were like.

Then there was also the fact that every time he thought of another man touching her, he felt rage boiling up in his chest. He hadn't been this bothered by it before, but now he felt an ownership over her that had nothing to do with having been her first and only lover. He felt like there were certain parts of her that only he should ever be allowed to touch and see. He was glad he was her first lover because now he didn't have to torture himself with mental images of her wrapped around Weasley or Krum.

Likewise, he felt that she had her own rights to his body. He knew that Theodore Nott frequented Knockturn Alley's lodgings for meetings with random witches and that other men in his social circle often had girlfriends or wives and a mistress on the side with a few quick flings here and there. His mother and father often had quiet flings with different members of society or employees while they kept up their social faade of a happy marriage.

When Hermione had asked for exclusiveness at the beginning of their deal, he'd been elated. It meant that she actually had something more than a passing fancy for him. He had no trouble complying with her rule; he didn't even have an urge to be with anyone else, not even for a quick shag or a blow job. His secretary at the ministry often made passes at him and he furtively ignored her attempts at seduction. She was exactly what most of the other witches he'd been with were like. With them it was always too much make-up, painstakingly created hairstyles and clothing that showcased what they were selling. He got more of a hard-on watching Hermione cook breakfast in her yoga pants and his t-shirt than he did looking at his secretary's well displayed cleavage. Hermione wore little to no make-up and while her wardrobe had gotten more stylish since she'd left Hogwarts and gave her a sensual look, she wasn't fishing for compliments or a man. It took other women two hours to look as good as Hermione did when she rolled out of bed.

While Draco sat there musing about how lucky he had gotten, the wards outside their flat went off, alerting him to the doctor's presence. Getting up, he let the old man in and led him to the bedroom, waking Hermione up in the process.

"The healer's here, love," he said and helped her to prop herself up on the pillows of the bed.

"Thank you," she smiled at him and it warmed his heart. "Hello, Healer...?"

"Healer Brownstone, young lady. How do you do? Now, please tell me your symptoms." As he spoke, Healer Brownstone took various instruments out of his bag and began examining Hermione.

"Well, for the past three mornings I've not been able to keep anything down and I've been having the most trouble staying awake even though I sleep through the night. I've had headaches which seem to bring on crying spells. I think I might have mono or the flu. Ouch!" Hermione jumped when the healer pricked her arm and took some of her blood. He put the collected blood into a vial with a few potion drops and then gave her another potion to swallow.

"Now tell me, my dear, have your feet been swollen lately?"

"Now that you mention it, yes."

"Have you had any breast tenderness?"

"Yes, they're quite sore, actually." Hermione blushed and the healer moved Draco's shirt that she was wearing up to expose her stomach. All three occupants of the room stared at Hermione's belly, two of them with a confused expression on their faces. Suddenly, it began to glow a faint blue color, which steadily got brighter.

"It is as I thought. You aren't sick, my dear, you are pregnant." The old man smiled kindly at her and then turned to Draco. "Congratulations, young man. You'll want to make her an appointment in a week with an obstetrician. Here is a potion for prenatal care and see that she gets plenty of rest and is well-fed. Your obstetrician will tell you more. I recommend Healer Howard at St. Mungo's."

Getting up to see the old man out, Draco's heart thudded with excitement. He'd done it! He had successfully tied her to him. They would of course have to move to the Manor. He wanted his child raised in his family home and with Hermione living there it wouldn't be nearly so lonely and empty. He couldn't wait to take her shopping for maternity clothes. He wanted anything that would show off her bump. Planning out his next shopping trip, he opened the bedroom door to find her gone.

Draco hurried to the bathroom to check there. Nothing. He ran to check the kitchen, spare room, living room and even laughingly, the closets. Tearing through his flat he was beginning to hyperventilate when he suddenly recalled his watch.

"Hermione!" he breathed into the time piece's face and watched as her tear stained face came up and under it, the words, "Granger House". Closing his eyes he apparated with a pop and found himself pounding on the front door of her parents' house.

"Hermione! Hermione, we need to talk!" he shouted as he banged on the door with his fist. He was about to 'alohamora' the door when it swung open and he was face to face with Alex Downing.

"Well, well. Looks like the little creep actually managed to find the balls to do it." Draco glared at Alex's smirking features.

"Where is she?" he growled, pushing past Alex's broad shoulders.

When he was inside the house he saw Chris Granger coming down the stairs. "What the hell did you do to her?" he demanded angrily. "You got her knocked up and had the balls to say you don't want it!"

"I never said anything of the sort! Where is she?" Draco wasn't scared of Chris Granger on a normal day, but right now he backed up from the angry face of his girlfriend's brother. "I'm ecstatic that she's pregnant! I want to marry her!"

"You're damned right you're going to marry her! Don't you people have condoms? She's your responsibility and you had better take damned good care of her and treat her like gold."

"Look, all I know is that we called the doctor, he came over, told us she's pregnant, I saw him out the door and when I came back in the room, she was gone. I didn't get a chance to even say anything about it! I don't want her to get rid of it, I won't leave her and I'm trying my best to create my family, but I can't if you won't let me get to her to talk to her!"

Chris regarded him for a moment and Draco's chest heaved up and down after his outburst. He knew his normally pale face was flushed from his outburst. Finally Chris nodded at him and moved aside. "She's in her old room."

Draco took off up the stairs two at a time and opened the door without knocking. Hermione was curled up on her bed, her stuffed elephant clutched on her lap and her face wet with tears. When she saw it was him, she started crying anew, but squared her shoulders and regarded him.

"I didn't do it on purpose. I'm not trying to trap you into anything. I'm keeping it and I don't care what you say. You don't have to pay for anything, but I won't get rid of it. It's our baby and I'm going to love it and protect it."

"I plan on doing the same thing, love," he said softly and watched as she started crying all over again.

"But you don't want children! All you talk about is how much you love the fact that I'm not trying to get pregnant and trap you into marriage." She set the battered stuffed animal down and unconsciously put a hand over her stomach in a protective gesture that warmed his heart. She was going to be such a terrific mother.

"I know you didn't plan this. It just happened and to be perfectly honest, when the doctor told me, my first thoughts were that this was wonderful. I didn't want children with anyone else because I knew that I would just see that child as part of an entrapment. What we have is real. You'll be a wonderful mother and I wouldn't anyone else, ever, to be the mother of my children."

"But what we have isn't real! It's based off blackmail and what amounts to essentially prostitution on my part! Did you ever even really like me or did you just like shagging me?"

Draco was hurt, but he couldn't blame her because she thought what he wanted her to think. "Of course I like you! I wouldn't spend so much time with you if I didn't love being around you. You're the brightest witch of your age, surely you could have figured out that I have a more permanent attachment to you. We're getting married and we'll make the best of this."

"We aren't getting married!"

"Yes, we are," he said emphatically. Hermione came from a very religious family and if he had to he would resort to using their help to force her compliance in the matter.

"This is the most horrible foundation for a marriage to start ever!" She was distraught, but he could see she was trying to convince herself as well as him.

"Are you in love with someone else?" he demanded quietly.

"What?"

"Are you in love with someone else? Is there some other bloke you're pining away over while you're tied up with me? Someone you'd rather be with?"

She blushed. "No, I actually haven't given anyone else a thought. We pretend so much, I've kind of felt like I'm in a real relationship."

So you don't have anyone waiting on you?" she shook her head. "There's no one else, not even Weasley that you'd be forever regretful about leaving behind?"

She looked up at him. "There's no one," she admitted slowly. "At one time I had what I thought were very deep feelings for Ron. I'll always cherish him as a friend, but after everything, I could never be with him and now I know that I don't want to be with him. He wanted me to be someone I'm not. No one wants a plain Jane bookworm."

Draco was both elated and furious. She still believed herself unattractive and undesirable. Men fell over themselves to help her in Diagon Alley now that she dressed in more revealing attire and the ones who knew her were too afraid of making a fool of themselves to approach her for a date. If he let her go, she would have no trouble replacing him. He couldn't let that happen. If there was no one else she felt drawn to, then he would feel no remorse in compelling her into marriage.

"Hermione, can you honestly say you don't have any feelings for me? Can you honestly say that you stay home with me every weekend out of a sense of duty and not because you like spending with me?" He asked the questions with bated breath, his heart pounding and palms sweating.

Hermione looked downward and blushed. "No, I can't."

"We like each other, we enjoy spending time with each other, we're damned good together in bed, you've already promised me at least the next three years of your life and you're pregnant with my baby. There have been far worse foundations for marriage. Just look at Pansy and

Theo or my parents or any other pureblooded marriage."

Hermione groaned and put her head in her hands. "It wasn't supposed to happen like this."

"No, this probably isn't what you imagined, but life is typically better when it doesn't go according to plan. Before you, I'd planned on marrying whichever money-grubbing witch was least offensive and spending the rest of my life hiding from her. Instead, I got you and that's much better." He watched her quietly think and he briefly thought about obliterating her and making her think their relationship was real.

Giving a defeated sigh, Hermione raised her head and looked into his eyes with her amber brown ones and he knew he'd won. "Fine, I'll marry you but only for as long as I'm beholden to you. We'll work everything out from that point onward."

"Fine." He was exasperated. It wasn't what he wanted to hear, but it was close enough. She probably didn't know that divorce in the wizarding world was almost impossible and if she did figure out a way to accomplish it, he had three years to come up with obstacles and further tie her to him. He was Slytherin to his core and while that didn't automatically make him evil, it did make him sneaky and cunning which often had the side effect of underhandedness. Not wanting to think about it, he sat down on the bed next to her and gathered her into his arms. He held her on his lap while she held the silly stuffed pink elephant on hers.

"What's its name?" he asked, inclining his head towards the creature.

"Marvin," she laughed. "I got him for Christmas when I was two. He and Teddy were my best friends when I was young."

"It must've been quite a downgrade to go to Potter and Weasley then. I imagine you missed Marvin and Teddy's conversation skills being stuck with those two," he teased. She playfully punched him on the arm and he stood up with her in his arms, taking both the stuffed toys with them. "We'll take them and put them in the nursery, a nice heirloom for our little boy."

"Or little girl," she countered as she let him carry her down the stairs.

"No, Malfoys always have boys first. There hasn't been a female Malfoy born for almost a century and she had three older brothers. Of course, if you have your heart set on a daughter, we could always keep having babies until we get one."

"You'll do nothing of the sort with her!" Chris and Alex were sitting on the lounge and Chris stood up when he heard about his sister becoming a baby factory. "Hermione, are you okay?"

"I'm fine, Chris." Hermione looked at her brother from her position in his arms. "We just had a misunderstanding and I overreacted." Her fingers played with the collar of Draco's shirt and it was having a very pleasant effect on his body that he didn't want her brother to see.

"Are you sure you don't need anything? Alex and I can take care of anything you might need," Chris said with concern in his eyes. Draco's hands instinctively tightened on Hermione's body.

"I'll be the one taking care of her and I am more than capable of giving her anything she might want or need," Draco said with purpose. He was going to bring up the fact that if it weren't for him Chris would be dead and his parents destitute, but he didn't think Hermione would

appreciate that.

"Chris, I'm touched for your concern, but right now I just want to go home. Thank you for being there and thank you for your support. I'll talk to you soon, okay?"

Grudgingly Chris let her go. As Draco apparated them back to their flat he was elated. When she said the word 'home' now, it meant the same place he was. Taking her to their bedroom he laid her on their bed and went to get some more tea and toast. When she was awake, they would talk about their wedding, when they would move into the manor.

A/N- Sorry it took me so long to update, but I have a very good reason. I broke my ankle and had to have a bone graft and ankle fusion and spent two weeks in the hospital. Hopefully things will get better and story updates will be coming quicker.

A/N- As for Draco being sneaky, I feel that's just in his character for this story. Should he be honest with her? Yes. Should he have gotten her pregnant without her knowledge? No. However, he is Slytherin and for them the 'ends always justify the means'. Also, if he suddenly turned mushy and revealed his feelings, this story would be cut very short. Thank you to everyone who has reviewed! You are all very kind, lovely people!

Chapter 12: Planning the Future

"I don't see why it's necessary! Why can't we just have two quiet ceremonies; one Catholic to appease my family and then one wizarding to appease yours? There's no reason to encompass them in the same ceremony! Besides, it will cost a fortune to rent out St. Paul's Cathedral and my parents can't pay for that." Hermione was arranging her clothing in the closet of her new home in Malfoy Manor as she argued with her fianc. Upon learning of her pregnancy, Draco had insisted that they move into the manor and that they be married within the month and he and his mother were planning the largest, most lavish wedding she'd ever heard of and it was happening within the next two weeks. From the way that Narcissa was talking, her wedding would rival that of Princess Diana and while Hermione had always dreamed about her wedding day, she didn't know if she wanted it to be this prolific.

"Of course it's necessary! You'll be a Malfoy and I'll pay for the wedding. It would be a great insult to you if we didn't make it the social event of the year."

"But I just want something quiet with only our close family and friends. That's not insulting, it's sentimental."

"Think about it, Hermione. If we have a small, quiet ceremony that doesn't raise any interest and people do the math after little Mordecai and Malachi are born, they'll know we got married because of the pregnancy and they'll think I'm ashamed of you. You'll be accused of being a gold digger and do you really want our children to have that stigma growing up? Do you want them to be teased and to think that they were a blight upon my existence?"

"No one who knows me would ever think such a thing! And we aren't naming them Mordecai and Malachi!" Hermione was flabbergasted. They had found out at their obstetrician visit that they were having twins and Draco had come up with the most awful names for her poor babies.

"No, but those that do not will freely spread rumors and those rumors will later be used as cruel taunts on the playground." Draco's eyes bore into hers and she caved.

"Fine, we'll have the huge wedding, but what are we going to do about my muggle family? Only my parents and Chris know that I'm a witch and the ones who don't know will be terribly hurt if I don't invite them."

"We'll have a ministry official obliviate them so they'll think they witnessed a traditional muggle ceremony. Now that that's settled, I'll make you an appointment at the boutique so that Madame Gisele can start designing options for your wedding gown. Your mother and grandmother have said they'll handle the invitations and my mother wants us to go look at floral arrangements and caterers this afternoon."

Draco continued to prattle on and Hermione smiled indulgently. He loved to organize events and she had no doubt that their wedding would be no different. Looking down at the large flower made out of diamonds on her ring she smiled wistfully. It was very large and intricately made, with a circular diamond in the middle surrounded by six marquis cut diamonds as petals. It had taken her breath away when he'd presented it to her. He even got down on one knee and slipped it on her finger. The only thing missing was the fact that none of it was real.

Hermione was no fool; she knew that Draco cared for her a great deal and that he was borderline obsessed with her. She knew that she had been the first person he'd ever been truly affectionate with and that she was the first to ever take an interest in him as a person. Draco Malfoy had been a very lonely boy and she was the only person who had ever enjoyed spending time with just him for no reason other than she liked his company.

Of course he was still blindingly annoying at times and he had so much selfish ego that she often wondered how he fit his big head through the floo network, but she'd learned to take him with a grain of salt and actually found most of his habits endearing. He guarded her jealously at work when they took their lunch together and he constantly wanted to be let in to different parts of her life. However, obsession and caring did not equal love and for some reason it made Hermione sad that she did not have his love.

When he had asked if there was anyone else she had startled herself because there truly wasn't anyone that she would rather be with than Draco. Yes, he'd blackmailed her but she had complete confidence that he wouldn't leak the pictures. She still couldn't believe she'd done those things and it would totally shatter her public image if the details of her relationship came to light, but she honestly couldn't say she was unhappy. In fact she was very happy. While she loved her Gryffindor Friends like family she'd always felt a little on the outside because of her uptightness. Draco was equally fastidious and dedicated to his work even though he acted calm and flippant, so he understood her manic behavior. They both loved literature and the arts and she loved teasing him to get a rise out of him. Then there was the fact that their sex life was amazing. Instead of getting boring, as Hermione had hoped in the beginning, it got better and better. Draco could make her come in under thirty seconds or he could draw her orgasm out for ages. She knew his sculpted body equally well and she reveled in the variety their intimate life entailed. Now if only they were in love, everything would be perfect.

Coming back to the present, Hermione answered Draco's question of who she wanted as her bridesmaids. "Ginny and Luna, of course."

"Well, you'll need another. How about Padma Patil? The two of you were good friends at

Hogwarts." Draco spoke as he wrote out notes and attached them to legs of the various owls that Malfoy Manor had.

"Why do I need more? I thought you were just going to have Crabbe and Goyle stand up for you."

"Yes, well I asked Blaise as well." Draco had finished writing his notes and he pulled her from the closet over to their massive king size bed with the plush midnight blue velvet comforter.

Pulling her on top of him, he fell backwards over the bed and forced her to straddle him.

"Although it is a pressing matter, I can think of loads more things to do rather than talk about the wedding. For instance, you can go on another litany of how big my cock is and how much you love having it inside you."

Hermione blushed at the reminder of her orgasm induced rant the previous evening when they'd made love for the first time in their new bed. Draco had forced the elves to redecorate the master suite so that they shared a bathroom, closet and the color scheme was entirely different from when Lucius and Narcissa had used the room. He said the last thing he wanted to be reminded of while they had sex was his parents. Hermione couldn't blame him. She liked Narcissa, but the thought of her and Lucius killed any sex drive she had.

"Why don't we talk about baby names other than Mordecai and Malachi? They might be girls, you know?" She settled herself squarely on his groin and brought his arms above his head so that it looked like she was pinning him down. In truth, she didn't have the strength, but he let her feel dominant every so often because he knew she liked it.

"Well, you already said no to the best names for our children, so I think Mordecai and Malachi are a perfect compromise." He smirked up at her incredulous face.

"Scorpius and Abraxas are not the best names for our children! I like Liliana and Rosalie."

"Our boys will get beat up if we name them that." He laughed as she playfully beat on his chest.

"Fine, how about Michael and Nicholas if they're boys?"

"Those names are so blas," he said. "I want them to have good strong names that have character."

"If we name our son Scorpius the only character he'll have is that of a cartoon! Either that or he'll be thirty and still living at home playing D and D or some online wizarding equivalent and never have a date in his life. He'll have no choice; his name is Scorpius! And do you WANT our children to be labeled dark wizards the second they set foot in Hogwarts? With names like Malachi Malfoy, they will."

Draco flipped her over so that she was now below him and smirked at her, something that could either fan the flames of her temper or turn her heart over with affection. This time it was the latter.

"Neither of our sons or any other children we have will be dateless. They'll have the Malfoy charm and if we happen to have girls, they'll have your pretty face and my blonde hair and when they finally turn thirty and are allowed to date, we'll pull our hair out trying to think of ways to keep men out of the house."

At the casual way he spoke of them being together for over thirty years, Hermione's heart stilled. Could she live in a loveless marriage? Was she being too naive to think that her life would unfold like a Disney movie? Yes, she knew he cared about her, but she also sometimes felt like his favorite toy. She attempted to hide her discomfort with humor.

"If you dare lock up our daughters, I'll hex your manhood off."

"You wouldn't do that, it's your favorite part of my anatomy," he grinned down at her as he reached under her skirt to move her knickers aside and shove said piece of anatomy into her already moist pussy. "Can you really imagine going without this?"

Inside, Hermione cursed him. He was well hung and he knew it. She jerked her hips upwards and swiveled them while clenching her inner muscles around his cock. It was her turn to smirk at his hiss of pleasure. He clenched her wrists tighter in his hands and growled, "I swear, if I didn't know for a fact that I was your only lover, I would find and kill the man who taught you how to do that and then tie you to my bed for a year."

He buried his face in her neck and Hermione purred into his ear, "Jealous much?"

He began to move in and out of her with harsh, determined strokes. "I can't help it that the thought of another man knowing your body the way I do makes me murderous. I thought we established some time ago that I don't like to share, especially not you."

"As long as that goes for you as well, you have nothing to worry about. However, if you do happen to look elsewhere, I might just take that tour of Puddlemere United's locker room that Oliver Wood has been offering me." Her statement got the effect she wanted. His grey eyes darkened and he pulled her off the bed and wedged her between the wall and his body, never once disengaging himself. As he thrust upwards with his hips, banging her against the wall, Hermione closed her eyes and lost herself in the feeling of being dominated.

"I haven't so much as gotten a hard on from looking at another woman, so you have absolutely no reason to threaten me with that. However, if you want me to smash Wood's pretty face in, by all means, go ahead. You're mine, and no fucking pretty boy quidditch player is going to change that." He bit down on the top of her breast and Hermione came, screaming out his name.

He maneuvered them back to the bed so that he could angle himself deeper inside her. "Say you're mine," he commanded and gave her a light slap on the hip.

"Ow! I'm yours," she said as he grabbed her hips and held her still so that he could control the angle of his thrusts better. They were both still almost fully clothed and this heightened the sense of urgency she felt as her second orgasm came crashing down on her. This time the sensations milking his cock made Draco come as well.

Panting, Draco helped her to right her clothing and using his wand, removed the wrinkles in their clothes. When she stood up, he slid her knickers off her legs and put them in his pocket. Looking at her steadily, he said matter-of-factly, "You are mine. I'm going to marry you, you're going to have my children and I'm never going to let another man touch you. When we're at the caterer's, I want you to look at me and know that I've got your knickers in my pocket. I'm keeping you."

Hermione didn't say anything. How could she? As declarations of intent went, this one was a

showstopper. She slipped on her pumps and walked over to him to take his hand as he apparated them to the florist and his waiting mother. While she picked out flowers, she couldn't help but notice Draco's possessive gaze on her and the hand he never once took off the small of her back burned with intensity through her dress. She had obviously underestimated his want and, or need of her. The only question she had was could she deal with it?

Chapter 13: Coming Home

Hello All! This chapter isn't much and I'm sorry that it is so short, but I had to post something to help rid me of my writer's block. Thanks to everyone who leaves a review! You guys are awesome and I hope everyone is well. Cheers! G.C.

Draco entered his home to the sounds of pots and pans being angrily thrown around in his kitchen. These sounds followed by what seemed to be vegetables being angrily chopped made him wary as he opened the door that led to the kitchen, not even bothering to go upstairs and take off his ministry robes. Hermione was in a tiff and though his first reaction was to turn from the scene before him, he quietly shut the door behind him and asked, "What happened?"

His wife of two months glared at him for a few moments as she dumped a chopping board full of peppers and onions into the giant pot she had on the stove range. "Do you want the good news or the bad news first?" she asked, dangerously.

Licking his lips nervously, Draco replied, "The good, please."

"Well, the good news is that the babies are progressing normally and are all healthy. Also, you'll be pleased to know this, they are all boys."

Draco sat down at the small table in the exceedingly large kitchen. "All? Don't you mean both?" he asked, breathing heavily. What had he done?

"No, I mean ALL the babies, Draco. As in I'm carrying three of your children at the moment, not one, not two, but three. Therein ends the good news." Hermione began cutting the homemade pasta she had just started into thin strips.

"Three babies is good news?" he asked.

"Yes, it is! I won't have any of our children ever thinking they were unwanted. Our third little one, who was hiding behind his bigger brothers is a surprise, but not bad news."

"And what of the bad news?" he asked, almost not daring to.

"The bad news is that the extra rest I'll be needing as a result of my multiple pregnancy won't be a problem seeing as I've been forced into a leave of absence. Apparently it is the Ministry's prerogative that no expecting witches should be allowed in the department of mysteries due to its volatile nature. I won't be expected back until the boys are at least three months old." With that, Hermione threw the last of her chopped vegetables into the pot with the simmering tomato sauce.

Draco sighed in relief. Was that all that was troubling her? Here he thought that she had

somehow found out about his meddling and was deciding to divorce him after only two months together. He watched her three month pregnant form move about the kitchen and smirked. Although she was only three months pregnant, she looked about six months along. It was probably due to the extreme amount of baby Malfoys she had growing inside of her. Deciding he'd better show some sympathy or else his ass would be sleeping alone that night he pretended to be aghast at what the ministry had forced upon her.

"That's ridiculous," he said, "It's awful! Isn't there anyway you can work your way around it?"

"No, they won't let me back in, but they will hold my job for me." She was tasting the sauce for her pasta and Draco was getting quite hungry smelling the delicious aroma.

"Well, there are lots of things that you can do that would be much more productive than sorting through old prophecies on Celestina Warbeck." He said as he came up behind her and rested his hand possessively on the mound that was his children growing in her body.

"Oh? Like what?" she asked. "And another thing! These are definitely your children! I've spent all week wanting spaghetti and the second I get home, I start to make it, but oh no! They've demanded apple tart with pistachio ice cream. Fortunately I probably won't have to put up with your demanding offspring in me for a whole nine months."

Draco was still busy trying to digest the thought that he would be father three times over. "What do you mean you won't be pregnant the whole nine months? Does the mediwitch think you'll lose the babies? And if you're craving apple tart with pistachio ice cream, why aren't you eating it?"

"No, the babies are fine, but it isn't uncommon at all for multiple births to come a month or two early. I might deliver at seven months; the mediwitch thinks it's highly likely I will since the babies are so well developed already. I'm not making apple tart because I've wanted this dinner all week, I've prepared for it and I won't let them dictate my life this early on in theirs."

"So while I'm eating spaghetti, I guess you'll be making apple tart, then, right?"

Hermione let out a defeated sigh. "Yes," she said as she started pulling items out from under cabinets to make the dessert. She had calmed down visibly, seeming to need the little outburst. Draco was glad she had waited to let it out on him rather than calling her mother or Ginny Weasley. It meant that she was leaning on him emotionally.

Getting up, he walked over to her and pulled her into his embrace. Even with her enlarged belly she still fit to him perfectly. Every time he looked at her he got hard and his feeling of possessive euphoria had increased ten fold now that she was showing. Not wanting to do another battle with her hormones, Draco merely kissed the top of her head and said, "Now, back to what I was talking about earlier. There are lots of things that you can do to keep yourself busy."

"Like what?" she asked, in a small tired voice. She waved her wand and the apples in front of her were sliced into thin strips and laid over the unbaked crust in the pan.

"Well, for starters, you could write a book."

"A book? What kind of book?"

"Well, you're well versed in dozens of subjects. You could write one on spell-craft for beginners, you could write a book for the muggle families of wizarding children to help them ease their way into the new stages of their child's life, you could write an updated version of Hogwarts: A History, or you could write all of them. You love books so much that it makes sense to me that you'd be an author as well as an avid reader." He was absentmindedly rubbing her stomach when suddenly he sensed what felt like tiny fingers lightly tapping his palm through Hermione's stomach. It wasn't the first time he'd felt his babies moving inside her, but every time he did, the miracle of it always made him pause with delight.

This was what he'd wanted for so long. He wanted someone to wait impatiently on him to get home just to so that they could talk to him, and not about money or redecorating the parlour for a dinner party. He had someone he could complain to without censure or reservation and even though he was once again residing in the house he was born in, he actually felt at home. Before, it had been a giant museum-like monument to the Malfoy name and one little corner of it had held his personal belongings. It was a place that he slept, but since going to Hogwarts, it hadn't been home.

Now, with Hermione living within its walls, the Manor had become much more vibrant. Their rooms and the library and the kitchen all had special memories and since he now owned all the priceless antiques surrounding them, he no longer felt any kind of fear at breaking them. This made all movement throughout the grand house much more relaxed. He now moved with the ease of a cocky second year on the first day of school at Hogwarts: recklessly sure of himself and basking in the glory of his surroundings.

Even though it had never felt like 'home' to him before, it had been important to him to instate Hermione as mistress of Malfoy Manor because that would prove to all wizarding society that she was his and that this was no short little affair. Even though their wedding had been the social event of the decade and every bride in the wizarding world was clamouring for a 'Hermione Malfoy' wedding dress, there were still skeptics who saw Hermione's bulging belly at the Ministry and insisted that it couldn't possibly be a love match.

The thing that played on Draco's fears and fed his paranoia was the fact that everyone was correct in their assumption that there was no possible way she could have fallen for him. Rita Skeeter had interviewed his mother asking if she thought that Hermione had gotten pregnant on purpose in order to get a hold of the Malfoy fortunes. His mother had artfully spun a tale in which she and Hermione were very close and that the two of them had been engaged for quite some time and had kept the details of the wedding very hush-hush on purpose and that the babies had been an early wedding present. Narcissa's charm had sold the readers of the Daily Prophet on Hermione's innocence as did her status as a war hero. However, it did turn a large amount of suspicion on to Draco. No serious newspapers ran speculations on his motivation for marrying her, but there were a few snide comments that hit far too close to the truth for Draco's comfort.

However, Hermione was married to him and she generally scoffed at the accusations thrown at their relationship. If they did tell the real truth of their relationship now, nobody would believe them. At least, nobody would believe them until Draco pulled out the pictures from Hogwarts. Thinking back on those, Draco was reminded of the fact that he had Hermione about his plans of keeping her. They hadn't discussed it since that evening and he really didn't want to revisit the conversation because he felt there was nothing to discuss. All his cards were on the table and he now had pictures, a contract that included her brother's life and three children to make

her stay. Of course, there was also the fact that she had promised to love, honor and obey him until her death. She'd made that promise in a wizarding ceremony and it was similar to an Unbreakable Vow, except without the horrible death. She would just cease to function and fall into a horrible depression. He knew that she believed there was a way out of the vows, otherwise she never would have agreed to the ceremony and his insistence of expediency gave her little time to fully research the consequences of bending to her family's will.

Draco watched her mull over his book options as she baked her dessert. They ate dinner and she shared her ideas with him and it appeared that she liked the idea of becoming an author. The sex they had that evening in the bathtub was slow and luxurious, with Draco running his hands over her gloriously curved body, biting her occasionally to further mark her as his. They went to bed naked and they entwined in each other's arms, with her head resting on his chest.

As he drifted off to sleep, Draco thought about how he was going to ensure that this sense of belonging and serenity stayed with him. He knew that it all hinged on her never finding out how much he needed her and just how far he'd been willing to go to make certain that she was tied to him.

Chapter 14: Fertile Myrtle? Not Quite

The room of the obstetrics healer in St. Mungo's was covered in yellow wall paper with jumping bunnies and waddling ducks moving around it. Hermione thought to herself that the walls should have something more adult on them. She was having a baby, she wasn't one herself. Shifting on the examination table, she waited for Healer Howard to make an entrance. You would think that the wizarding world would be able to come up with something more comfortable than the scratchy paper gown she was wearing, but apparently not. She passed the time by swinging her feet and looking at her toes whenever her legs were straight out. Since she was now six months pregnant, this was the only way she could look at her feet. Normally when she looked down all she could see was a large round bump.

"Good morning, Mrs. Malfoy!" Healer Howard was a dark skinned woman with long braids and an impossibly cheerful disposition. "And how is mummy today? Has everything been going well?"

"As well as it can," Hermione replied. "I'm still not used to being this tired and it's frustrating. I also can't get enough of pistachios and peanuts."

Healer Howard laughed. "Yes, well, that's your little boys craving the extra protein. How is daddy? He seemed to be taking the news of triplets well the last time he was here." The obstetrician was waving her wand over Hermione's stomach and slowly three tiny beings that looked like they were made of smoke appeared.

"He actually took the news better than I thought he would. He's been very excited and actually is talking about breeding his own quidditch team. He loves to shop so having to buy for three has been pure heaven for him." In actuality, Draco had been very supportive of her during her pregnancy. He'd stayed with her during most of his free time and napped with her, holding onto her tightly. She didn't mind because she felt very unsightly and was an emotional wreck so having someone to go through this with was a bonus. The only reason he wasn't at this appointment was because Percy Weasley had called an emergency meeting. They weren't going to be discovering anything new, so Hermione told him to skip it.

"And how would you feel about breeding a quidditch team?" the healer playfully asked Hermione.

"Honestly? The three boys were such a surprise that I can't imagine having anymore children. At least not right away. I wouldn't mind having a little girl later on," she finished wistfully.

"Well, you had to know that multiple births were a possibility when you went on the fertility potion. It doesn't always happen when couples who are having difficulty conceiving, but it isn't uncommon." Healer Howard was moving each of the baby forms around and checking them with what looked like a laser pointer for any birth defects.

"I wasn't on the fertility potion. This just happened," Hermione said.

"Yes, you were my dear. You can lie to your friends, but you don't have to pretend with me. Lots of couples have a hard time conceiving, especially if they come from a family as pureblooded as the Malfoys. There's nothing to be ashamed of, dear."

"I'm not pretending, Healer Howard, I never took the fertility potion. I wasn't trying to conceive, in fact, I was doing my best not to." Why was it suddenly hot in the room?

"I have your chart right here, Mrs. Malfoy and right here, from your first two blood test results, you can see that you tested positive for the fertility potion." Taking in the girl's shocked face, the healer could see that she wasn't lying. Maybe Hermione hadn't been trying to conceive, but somebody had sure wanted her to do so.

"Could I have a copy of this?" Hermione asked in a strangely calm voice.

The rest of the visit was polite but strained. It wasn't the healer's prerogative to get involved in the marital affairs of her patients. Hermione on the other hand was suddenly feeling very stupid. So many things were starting to fall into place. His questioning at last Christmas with his mother and Pansy, the fact that he had suddenly become incredibly non-chalant about contraceptives and his sudden ability to take the surprising news of triplets calmly all suddenly made sense. The Draco Malfoy she had moved in with would not have taken marriage and being shackled with children that well unless it was exactly what he wanted.

Hermione was boiling by the time she got her clothes on and was out the door. She had been manipulated and tricked and by someone she cared very much for and was starting to love. He was someone whom she thought cared for her as well. Apparently all he cared about was getting his own way. Well, he apparently wanted to be married to her, for better or worse. He was about to find out that his marriage (which if Hermione could help it wouldn't be in existence much longer) was about to get far, far worse than he could ever imagine.

A/N- Sorry for the delay and sorry that it's so short. I just started back to school and work and wanted to get this posted before I post the next chapter which should be very long. Thank you to everyone who reviews. I find all your comments extremely helpful and they keep me going, so please keep them coming! Thanks so much!

Cheers! G.C.

Chapter 15: The Ends Always Justify The Means, Right?

Draco sat in the meeting listening to Percy Weasley drone on and on as he exalted their supervisor, Mr. Lightbody with obvious manipulative praise. Honestly, who did he think he was fooling? He was doodling on the parchment in front of him, practicing writing out the names that he and Hermione had decided to give their boys. Aidan, Alistair and Abraxas or Abraxas, Aidan and Alistair? He decided that he liked the first order. Hermione had finally caved on the name Abraxas and he conceded Aidan to her. They both agreed on Alistair.

The meeting was coming to a close and as Mr. Lightbody lifted the silencing charm on the room he'd cast so they wouldn't be disturbed, Draco heard agitated voices outside the door.

"Please, I can't let you talk to him until the meeting is finished Mrs. Malfoy," he heard the voice of Dennis Creevey say.

"Don't-call-me-that!" Draco recognized Hermione's voice and his stomach plummeted. This could not be good. A second later there was a slight yelp and the doors to the meeting room burst open and his wife stood there, eerily calm since she had just body bound a former housemate and intruded on a private ministry meeting.

"You!" She fixed him with a stare that could melt stone and he watched as the air around her sizzled with her reined in magic. She was wearing a flowing white dress and simple gold hoop earrings and she looked like an avenging angel. He had no doubt that in her current state she could cause locusts to fall from the sky. However, she schooled her features and regarded him with distaste. "We need to talk."

Not even Percy objected and as Draco watched his fellow employees leave the room, he wished that one of them would be nosy enough to stay behind and at least witness his murder. When the room was empty except for the two of them, he finally rose from his seat and walked over to stand in front of her.

"How could you?" she asked, shaking with rage. "I actually thought you cared about me, never mind didn't think so little of me that you'd manipulate my life and my body like this!"

"How could I do what?" he asked and he let the cold, indifferent mask slip onto his face.

"Don't! Don't you dare put that face on with me! You know perfectly well what I'm talking about! I didn't get pregnant on accident, you've practically raped me!"

"So you found out about me pushing things along, so what? Do you suddenly not want my devil spawn in you anymore?"

"No, but I would have liked a choice in the matter! You purposely drugged me so that I'd get pregnant! I should have known that something was up when you didn't flip out. I've been going this whole time thinking that I had some control over my life and the decisions I made, but you've been playing me like a violin and pulling strings like a puppet master!"

"So I wanted you to get pregnant. You were happy enough with the situation until you found out about the potion. Why does it matter?" He crossed his arms in front of her in a defensive stance.

"It matters because you took the choice completely away from me and I can't even divorce you over it!" Her wand was sparking now. "Our deal was to get married and stay married until the end of our bargain and then assess the situation from there. I've just been to the department of domestic affairs where they informed me that unless you have attempted to murder me I can't even file for a separation. You blatantly took advantage of my lack of knowledge regarding wizarding marriage!" She was stamping her foot now and for a woman pregnant with triplets, she was moving around quite quickly.

"I never lied to you, I just left things out. You weren't unhappy in our situation, so I repeat, why does it matter now?" Draco was getting very nervous. She had gone to file for divorce? Thank Merlin he had gone this route. She couldn't leave him. This was all worth it, right?

"I was happy! I really and truly enjoyed spending time with you, I liked making love with you and I loved the fact that you were being so supportive of what I thought was a surprise pregnancy and it was all a lie! I thought you actually cared about me and not just getting your rocks off. The reason I'm upset is because none of it was real! We were lying to the public, our friends and family and you were lying to me! How could you?"

"How could I? Let's not forget that you never would have stayed if I hadn't started blackmailing you. You whored yourself out to me for your brother's safety and when that was over and done with if I wanted to keep you, I had to have something to make you stay. You wouldn't stay for money, but you'd stay for my children."

She took two steps forward with tears gleaming in her eyes and slapped him across the face. His head swung back and his jaw ached. He already hated himself for what he'd said to her. She was right. He was a foul, loathsome, evil, little cockroach.

"I'm leaving. I can't divorce you, but there's no law that says I have to live with you. I'll owl you when the boys are born." Tears were now streaming down her face and her shoulders trembled.

No! She couldn't leave! He panicked. As much as he hated himself before, he still couldn't hate himself as much as he would after his next sentence came out. "If you move out, I'll print those pictures," he said quietly.

She turned to face him. "What?" Her eyes looked at him as if for the first time.

"I'll print them. You don't need to be like this. We were happy before. You're staying, unless you want the entire wizarding world to know that you're much more than the good little girl they know and love. Don't make me print those, Hermione, I care about you more than you'll ever know. I never wanted to hurt you, but I had to do what was necessary to keep you. You said yourself that you never would have stayed if it hadn't been for the pictures. Don't make me do it." His own eyes were burning with unshed tears as he watched her shocked face process what he'd said. She turned away from him and he felt something inside him break. However, she turned back to him, her face flushed and angry.

"You only care about yourself, Draco, and that's what hurts the most." Then she screwed up her face and pointed her wand at his crotch and whispered, "Reducto!"

It took him almost an hour in a ministry bathroom stall to get his manhood back to its original size. When he finally achieved it, he spent the next half hour crying. It was almost like being in sixth year again, crying alone in a bathroom stall. Finally, he pulled himself together and left

work. When he got home, Hermione was there and she also had been crying.

Chapter 16: A Picture Speaks A Thousand Words

Life never goes the way it was planned. Her parents had planned on sending their two children to Oxford, but neither had made it, thus far. When she was ten, she had planned on going to St. Augustine's comprehensive school. Instead, she got a letter from Hogwarts, informing her family that the little 'accidents' that happened around her made her part of a secret society that had existed since the twelfth century. She had never planned on befriending the most well-known wizard in the western world, she just wanted to make certain that they didn't lose house points. She never planned on shagging the one person in school who made her stomach turn, but she did. She never planned on marrying him, certainly not on having his children and most definitely did not plan to fall in love with him.

All her careful planning and well thought out decisions had brought her to where she currently was: seven months pregnant in the nursery her sons would be using any day now and crying her eyes out over a man she had fallen completely in love with. She sat in a chair, folding the tiny baby grows she had received as gifts from her baby shower the previous day. She was placing the items in the dresser drawers of the nursery furniture, arranging them in color. It was very important to her that she do this, for some reason. The 'What to Expect' books she'd been leafing through called it 'nesting' and it gave her something to take her mind off of Draco.

Yesterday's baby shower had been pure torture and she had wanted to call it off, but Narcissa Malfoy was not a woman to back down from a party once it was underway. She'd spent almost five hours in front of her friends and family acting as if nothing was wrong between them. Those five hours had been sheer torture because Draco kept his hands on her the whole time and for the first time in almost a month, she had let him. He acted like an attention starved kitten, rubbing his body over and over her own. He nuzzled her neck as he held her from behind, his hands resting on the swollen mound of her pregnant belly as he aligned their bodies and pressed himself fully against her, inhaling her scent like a drug addict falling off the wagon. She equally wanted to throw him off of her or to kick everybody out and just lay there crying in his arms.

She missed him so much and she knew he missed her as well. He walked around the manor with such a long face and she knew she had heard him crying once in the bathroom. There were days that she wanted to completely forget what she had found out, because then she would be happy. She thought several times of doing as he asked and just ignoring it. After all, she missed the talking, the closeness, the way he was the only person in the world that made her feel like she wasn't a beached whale or an emotional wreck. He'd sent her absolutely everything under the sun he could think of, but she wasn't about to take material gifts as a form of apology.

He hadn't apologized and he hadn't recanted his threat and those thoughts made Hermione cry the hardest. He didn't love her. He wanted her, was jealous over her, thought about her more than she ever realized, but he apparently didn't care what she wanted in life and also thought of her as a pawn to be manipulated. How could she love somebody like that? More importantly, did he think so little of her that he didn't think she might stay if he just came out and asked? She knew that the particulars of their relationship had transpired as more of a business transaction, but did she really seem so callous? What kind of situation was she bringing not one, but three babies into?

She was distracted from her melancholy thoughts by an owl pecking on the window. Getting up, she sighed inwardly when she realized it was just bringing the Daily Prophet. Taking the paper from the bird, she expected it to just fly away, but instead, it perched itself on the edge of one of three cribs in the room. They stared at each other blankly for a moment before she realized that she had to pay the monthly subscription price. Groaning, she lifted herself from her position and waddled into Draco's study to look for the three sickles it cost to receive the Daily Prophet.

Opening drawers in his large mahogany desk, she shifted through business contracts, acquisitions and stock market portfolios before finally finding a black leather coin pouch. She tried to take it from the desk drawer, but it was caught between the two wood panels both on the side of the drawer and underneath. Pulling the drawer out farther, she looked underneath for the sign of the knot in the purse string. It wasn't there. Going back to the inside of the drawer she gave a yank on the coin purse and to her surprise, the bottom of the drawer came with it. Cursing at herself for breaking a priceless antique, she pulled the sickles out of the purse and didn't even watch as the owl took off through the house. She bent down to examine the drawer and try to figure out how to replace it when she saw something white under the piece of wood she'd dislodged. The desk drawer had a false bottom.

Reaching into the draw, she pulled out several large white envelopes with her name written on them. Opening up the one labeled 'Hogwarts' she gasped. Instead of finding the graphic pictures of their first night together, she found a group of very well-taken, innocent pictures of herself. The first one showed her sitting on the window seat of their Head's common room reading large book and twirling her hair around her finger. The morning light illuminated her face. In another, she sat next to the lake, once again reading, but this time she was holding on to an azalea blossom, every so often bringing it to her nose. She remembered that day. It had been springtime at Hogwarts and she'd felt so at peace sitting on the lawn, as if everything were perfect.

Opening another envelope she saw herself in the bath tub of his house in Italy. Her eyes were closed and her steady breathing made her breasts rise and fall, giving the photographer a quick, teasing glance at her nipples before they disappeared from view. It was sexual but not lewd. She was shocked to discover that most of the pictures were taken of her fully clothed and involved in mundane tasks, but she never looked at the camera. The way the pictures were taken, it looked as if the photographer wasn't apart of the world his subject was. Each picture was like looking at her through a window. The photographer had intimate knowledge of his subject, but she was very much unaware. Looking at the pictures, she was amazed at the level of care conveyed, almost as if each picture were a caress over her. As the pictures became more recent, they became more open, raw, showing the core of her humanity and personality displayed in the picture.

Only a third of them were sexual. She honestly wondered how she couldn't have noticed. She was supposed to be bright. She'd outwitted death eaters twice her age and with triple the experience but she couldn't see the emotion that a man she'd been living with for close to three years now had for her. She'd never thought of herself as beautiful or desirable, but the woman in these pictures was. Seeing herself through Draco's eyes she suddenly understood. She knew he was lonely, insecure and without many social graces, but she never understood until now that she was the focus not only of his photography, but also his world and he felt utterly removed from her.

Finally, she noticed a black envelope with a red wax seal on it. Her heart pounding, she opened

it and saw that for the first time since Hogwarts, Draco was in the picture with her and she was actually looking at the camera. The difference between the ones from Hogwarts and the ones that had obviously been taken in their flat was that these were pictures taken by a man in love. She stared at the one in which she knelt in the middle of their bed and motioned him forwards with her finger. The one of the two of them joined and kissing as his eyes drifted towards the lens wasn't of two people bent on mutual pleasure, it was two people relishing the other one's touch.

Her head had been swimming since she'd come in the room and tears were falling down her face for the twentieth time that day. Because of this she sensed in him the room, rather than hearing him. Looking up, she met his eyes and held his pained gaze.

"The ones you're looking for aren't in there," he said as he walked behind the desk to the shelf where an ornate box rested and tapping it with his wand, he opened it. "They're in here."

Hermione watched him as he pulled out an envelope and went to stand between the desk and the fireplace, which was currently aflame, despite the early spring weather. "I wasn't looking for them. I reached in to get money to pay the Prophet owl and the drawer bottom came up with the purse string," she said quietly. Her stomach was twisting itself into knots over the nervousness and she could feel it cramping.

She looked at him a moment and then turned away because she realized how puffy and red her eyes must look. She turned her head back towards him when she heard the flames crackle. He had just thrown in two of the pictures.

"What are you doing?" she asked, confused.

"These are the only copies," he said as she watched him feed the photographs one by one into the fire. "These are the negatives," he said, holding up a tiny white envelope after throwing all twenty-five photos into the flames. Without an ounce of hesitation, he threw the negatives into the fire, watching with her as they melted and turned into a puddle of goop. He turned back towards her and said, "I'd like to ask you to leave the others. I definitely won't be printing them and if they ever did get out, they don't show anything that the wizarding world doesn't already think they know." With that, he sat down in the arm chair in front of the fire and put his head in his hands, not looking at her.

"Where would I take them?" she asked.

"Wherever it is that you were going a month ago when you said you were leaving." His tone was indifferent and his face impassive, but she knew better.

"I'm not leaving them," she said, her mind made up. She began stuffing them back in their respective envelopes.

"Why?" he asked, suddenly agitated. "You can have as much of my money as you want, you can take any or all of my houses, you can take my whole family library with you, but you can't my sons and you can't those pictures. They'd be the only thing left of when my life had any meaning to it whatsoever," he finished in an almost pleading tone.

She finished putting the pictures into their envelopes and then stood as she put them back in his desk drawer. "I'm not leaving them," she said again and walked quickly into their bedroom,

grimacing in pain.

He followed her. "Fine, you can take the ones that were taken at Hogwarts, but you have to leave the rest. I'm not giving them up, Hermione!"

"I'm not asking you to," she said as she thrust an overnight bag into his hands and sat down on the bed, with tears springing to her eyes.

He seemed energized by this. "You can't leave just yet! You still have to wait until they're born!" he said gesturing at her stomach. "I have a right to see my children!"

She was through playing. "No, I have to leave right now. Can you help me up, please?" she asked.

'No! You've stayed this long and their nursery is ready here! They're Malfoys and they will be born with Malfoy Manor as their address!"

"They're going to be born RIGHT NOW, YOU ARSE!" she fairly bellowed as her water finally broke and ran down her legs. "I had planned on going about this with much more flair and dramatics, but as it is, they want to come out immediately. I'm staying, the boys are staying and the bloody pictures are staying! Right now, though I need to go to St. Mungo's, immediately, so get up off your ass and bring the overnight bag." With that, she moved as quickly as she possibly could through the house and floored to St. Mungo's with Draco on her heels.

A/N- Here ya go! Thanks to everybody who has stuck with me through this story and through 'Midnight'. You guys are utterly amazing! Also, I'm a review junky, so please send me more of your wonderful, addicting love!

Chapter 17: You Were The First To See Me

Draco spilled out of the floo network after Hermione and saw her waiting for him near the admissions desk. Not wasting any time, he ran over to her and listened as she gave the nurse their names and signed the necessary paperwork to be admitted. As soon as she was done, she leaned against the wall as another contraction swept over her body. He watched as her belly visibly shifted under the empire-waist dress she wore. He was on her in a flash, picking her up and holding her to him. Her face was flushed and her eyes were bright and she was the most gorgeous thing she'd ever seen before in his life.

"Put me down," she hissed. "People are staring." He grinned and pressed his face into her hair. This was the absolute best and most exciting moment of his life.

"You're really staying?" he asked. "With me? In the manor?"

"Yes! But if you want another month of sleeping at alone, go right on ahead and keep holding me. Actually, you don't have to put me down, just take me to a bed and get me some good potions and I'll do anything you ask," she groaned as something in her abdomen shifted.

Fortunately the nurse came back at that moment and led them to a private room where Hermione was hooked up to a monitor while the nurse went to fetch Healer Howard. Draco sat

next to her in the bed, holding her and rubbing her shoulders. His head was reeling. He'd expected her to be horrified by the pictures she found and he wasn't sure why she hadn't left, disgusted by his obsession.

Healer Howard came smiling into the room. Her smile faltered slightly when her gaze came to rest on him, however. He didn't care. Let the woman think what she wanted. He didn't owe her any apologies.

"Okay, Mrs. Malfoy, let's take a look at you and then we can get you prepped for surgery." Hermione nodded as the woman helped her out of her underwear and into the stirrups at the end of the bed. "Oh dear! I'm so sorry, dear, but we can't take you in."

"Why not?" they asked in unison. Draco could feel his wife tense and he did his best to remain calm.

"You are fully dilated, my dear. A few good pushes and you'll be meeting your oldest son." The medi-witch put on sterilized gloves and used her wand to point at Hermione's lower back. Immediately, Draco felt her relax.

"But- but I'm not ready for a natural birth! I skipped over that part in all the books because you said they would be coming by C-section!" she looked at Draco and he saw fear in her eyes.

"It's okay, love," he said. "If anyone can do this, you can. Where's that Gryffindor courage?"

"It's sitting at home with all the unread chapters on natural childbirth! How could I do this?" She moaned as the monitor began to beep.

"You can do this, Mrs. Malfoy," Healer Howard said. "It's the most natural thing in the world. Your next contraction is coming up and I need you to bear down and push!"

Hermione did as she was told and Draco held her hand. She strained and moaned and the sent of blood filled the air, but before he knew it, a tiny little head was visible and following it, a tiny little body with bluish appendages slid into the world and the waiting arms of Healer Howard. He was given a slap and Aidan Malfoy howled in rage at being evicted from his mother into a freezing cold hospital room. Tears fell down Draco's face as the nurse scourgified his son and then placed him, wrapped in a blanket, in his arms.

Abraxas and Alistair came four and nine minutes later, respectively. The nurse placed a different colored band on each infant's foot so that the adults in the room could tell them apart. Abraxas was smaller than his brothers, but other than that, the boys were practically identical. They were fraternal triplets, but as with most babies, they were incredibly similar looking. They boys were currently sleeping in their bassinets while Hermione smiled dreamily at them from across the room. Watching her and looking over at the three newest human beings he'd ever seen in his life, Draco marveled at how he'd ever felt alone and how quickly he'd already adjusted to the thought of being a father three times over. It was as if the boys had always been there.

Deciding that now was as good a time as any, he cleared his throat and looked at her. "What made you change your mind? Was it the boys?" he asked. He felt incredibly happy at the moment, so it was best to get the news that she didn't love him while he was still on his high of becoming a father.

"No," she responded so softly he almost couldn't hear her. "It was the pictures."

"The pictures? I thought you'd be put off by them."

"Before we go any further, I want you to tell me exactly how you feel about me. If you lie, we'll go back to the way things were this past month." He felt like she was looking through him.

"I- well, that is to say... I love you." He rubbed his sweaty palms on his pants legs and looked at his feet. "It started out as just needing you. I'd never lived with anyone before and after that first night I thought I was just blackmailing you so that I could shag you right under Potter's nose, but it became more than that. You never once tried to be coy or anything but yourself around me and I started to like it. Then I realized that you might find someone else and I'd be alone. I didn't have any friends, not the kind you have and the only people who wanted to talk to me did so because they wanted something from me. Those last few months of Hogwarts were more about shared living space rather than sex. I wanted to be the only one you took a shower with, brushed your teeth next to and got dressed in front of, much less slept with. Then in Italy, I realized that just having you behind closed doors wasn't enough. I wanted people to know I was with you and that you were with me. I did what I did with your brother because I wanted to help you, but also because I needed to find a way to get you to go public. I was sure you would say no and the pictures didn't seem like enough leverage, so I made it look like I was using you. Then, I realized that one day you would leave and that scared me. It scared me more than anything in life because I couldn't go back to what I was before. I couldn't watch you move out or move on and I knew that one day you would unless something drastic happened. I know what I did was horrible and I manipulated you and I'm sorry for it, but I'm not sorry about them. All my life, I've had everything I wanted and if I didn't have it, I could go out and buy it. You were the one thing I couldn't buy. You weren't impressed with money or political power and I don't think that good looks were ever important to you. Those things I just mentioned were my only selling points. I'm selfish, manipulative, whiny and I'd been a horrible, loathsome prat to you for most of my life. Why would you stay if you didn't have to?"

"When you found out about what I'd done, the only thing I could still hold over your head was the pictures. The only thing going through my head was that I had to keep you. I felt like you would be appalled if I told you that I would ever dare to hope that we'd have a real relationship. You didn't value anything I had because that's just one of your many wonderful qualities. Someone like you wouldn't stay for someone like me. However, making you stay the way I did was awful. I couldn't stand the way you looked at me and I couldn't stand how unhappy you were. That's why I burned the pictures. I love you and even if you don't love me or want me, I just want to see you happy."

He was shaking by the time he was done and she had tears in her eyes. He waited for her rejection with baited breath when his mother burst through the door along with the Grangers.

"Oh! My darling babies! Oh Draco, they look just like you did when you were born!" Wondering for a moment if someone had poly-juice potioned his mother, Draco stared at her in shock as she reached for Aidan, then Alistair and finally Abraxas.

"Wow, squirt, this one has hair just like you did when you were born!" Chris Granger had taken Alistair from Narcissa and Hermione's parents engulfed them both in tearful hugs. Alistair's hair stuck straight up in the air while his brothers' hair was plastered to their heads.

"Mum, Dad," Hermione began and the group finally noticed the tension in the room. "Would you guys mind giving us some alone time? You can take the babies in the other room to get to know them."

Her mother gave her a concerned look before saying, "Okay darling, we'll see you in a few, yeah?" Hermione nodded.

When they were alone again, Draco felt his gut drop and the blood drain from his face. Now that he couldn't see his sons, he was suddenly, acutely aware of their absence and that she would also be absent since he had essentially released her.

"Calm down," she said. "I know you and you're jumping to the worst conclusion already. I'm still staying and let me tell you why. I'm staying because in those pictures I saw a girl who was intelligent, pretty, fascinating and desirable. All my life I've known I was intelligent and hard-working. It's typically the first quality anyone notices about me other than my hair. It's also, up until recently, the only thing anyone has ever valued about me. I love my friends with all my heart, but none of them, not even Viktor has ever made me feel any of those other qualities. I meant what I said to them the night we 'debuted' our relationship. There's something about the pictures and the way you see me that brings out all those other qualities. I feel like all of my personal traits are brought out by you and some are even there because of you. You're correct in the sense that you are a bit selfish and whiny and you are very cunning and manipulative, but you are also the only person in my life to want me for exactly who I am and to work hard to keep me. All the other boys in my life have acted as if I should have to struggle to keep them. I am quite secure in my value as a person and I have always known myself, but I feel as if you were the first person to recognize me.* I'm still angry at the way you tried to keep me, but I'll get over it. The one question I want to know is what's so wrong with just asking me to stay?"

Swallowing thickly, Draco asked, "Will you stay with me for always?"

"On one condition," she nodded. "From now on, you will tell me what's going through your head and if you feel insecure, you'll talk to me about it. We're married and we have three little boys to raise, so I'm in this for the long haul. I love you, too." She kissed him and despite her body's reluctance to move, she leaned forwards into his embrace.

Draco held her like his life depended on it. He was scared. He was ecstatic. He had no idea how to give her the things she wanted, but he was going to break himself trying because she had looked into him, understood what she saw and not turned away. At that moment, his mother walked in with a crying triplet.

"I'm so sorry, Hermione, but I think he needs fed." Narcissa handed her grandson to her daughter-in-law and the Granger family came in the room carrying his brothers.

Draco would have liked to talk to Hermione more but he recognized the need to bond with his new family. He'd have to discover whatever it was that his mother was on and keep her in a steady supply. Maybe she'd be a more affectionate grandmother than she was a mother. He grinned and watched as Hermione's mother fussed around her and held Abraxas up to nurse. He walked over to his other sons and held each one in his arm, listening intently to Hermione and her mother talk about the boys.

While Marcus and Chris spoke to Narcissa, he heard her mother ask in a quiet voice, "What was that all about earlier, dear? Is everything alright?"

Hermione's eyes sought out his own. "Nothing, Mum, just a fight over some pictures."

"Pictures? Why on earth would you fight over something as trivial as pictures?"

"Well, I didn't like the way I looked in them." Hermione smiled at him and the corners of his mouth turned up in return.

"Well, I'm sure you looked lovely in them. Where are they?" Her mother had come over to inspect her other grandchildren and Draco handed Aidan over for his turn to nurse.

"We burned them," Hermione replied.

"Hermione, that's a silly thing! It's not like you to be so vain as to get that upset over how you look in some pictures. This is your children's birthday, you shouldn't be focusing on silly things like that," her mother chided.

"You're right, mum. They're just pictures." She turned and looked back at Draco who had sat next to her on the bed, petting her hair as she fed the second baby. "They're just stupid pictures that aren't worth fighting over. I love you, Draco."

"I love you, Hermione," he said back, ready to burst from contained happiness. "You know, all this talk has reminded me that I left our camera at home."

"That's fine, darling," Narcissa said. "I brought one. Put all the children with Hermione. We want a picture of all the hard work she's done."

They arranged the babies with their mother and everyone stepped back when she spoke up, "Draco get in here too, after all, you did a lot of work ensuring that they would get here as well." She gave him another knowing smile and for the first time since their talk, he felt truly forgiven. He took Alistair in one arm and Hermione as she held Aidan and Abraxas in the other. When the picture came out, it was over Hermione and Draco looking into each other's eyes and kissing their babies' heads before smiling at the rest of the world. They were a picture perfect family.

*That's a line from Jane Austen that I borrowed.

A/N- Epilogue coming soon!

Chapter 18: Epilogue

The steam from the Hogwarts engine engulfed Hermione's eyes as she stepped through platform 9 3/4. She couldn't see her family, but judging by the cacophony of noise coming from her left, they weren't far. Pulling the blanket from over the baby's head, she headed to where she heard her daughter's embarrassed voice.

"Daddy!" the curly haired girl with angular features hissed. "Put the camera away! You've taken enough to plaster our whole house with my face!"

"Stop complaining, 'Seph," Aidan Malfoy, a lanky boy of fourteen said. "When it was our year,

everybody stared because the Malfoy triplets were starting Hogwarts. At least there's only you and Alithia and the only person who's staring is Dad."

"Besides," Hermione heard her husband say, "it's not everyday I send my little girls off to school for the first time." Flash went the camera.

"Mum, make him stop! Nobody else is getting their picture taken," Alithia Malfoy begged her mother before running to her and hiding behind the diaper bag slung across her shoulder.

"Just let it happen," Abraxas said. "Next year it won't matter. You'll notice he's not taking our picture."

"Daddy! Take mine!" A tiny boy of six stood on the entrance stairway to the Hogwarts Express.

"Cygnus Marcus Malfoy, you come down from there this instant! Persephone, Alithia, stand together in front of the platform and let your father take one last picture. Draco, get one of the boys and then that's enough." Hermione took charge of the situation and Draco, instead of heeding her orders, turned to her and took a picture of her holding one year old Scorpius who had his fingers in his mouth. He grinned cheekily at her and Hermione smiled back as she took in her family.

Aidan, Abraxas and Alistair were already as tall as she was and all three had the trademark platinum blonde hair and piercing grey eyes of the many Malfoys generations before them had. From the nose up, they were the perfect image of Draco and below, they had their Uncle Chris' wide grin and strong chin. Alistair was slightly shorter than the other two and Abraxas had broader shoulders, but otherwise they were undeterminable to strangers. They were the chasers for the Slytherin team and a force to be reckoned with.

Her two daughters were fraternal twins. There hadn't been a fertility potion, but out came Persephone with dark brown hair and honey brown eyes with her father's angular facial structure. Alithia, the calmer of the two girls and the current champion of S.P.E.W. had long blonde curls, large blue eyes and Hermione's facial structure. Hermione had insisted on corrective braces so that her little girl wouldn't have the beaver-like teeth that she had suffered through. Persephone had her bossy, know-it-all nature combined with the Malfoy pride. However, she was fiercely loyal and protective of her sister and friends.

Finally, she looked at her youngest children. Cygnus had straight black hair and brown eyes. He took after his grandmother's sisters and there were days that she was certain that Ron's wife, Luna, had somehow transferred her genes onto the boy because he insisted in believing in the strangest of creatures and told his parents that nargles were nesting in the music room. The little blonde boy she held in her arms was Scorpius. Aidan and Abraxas called him the souvenir from Napoli. If only they knew that that's practically what they were.

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Thank you for reading, reviewing and offering encouraging words. You are all absolutely wonderful and I wish I had enough airfare to track all of you down and smother you with hugs. I dedicate this story to you all. If anyone ever wants to chat, my email is beatlefan176@aol.com.